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SHAPING THINGS TO COME

STALIN and Roosevelt have met for the first ime and shaken hands. The President travelled alf round the world to the meeting, and Stalin or the first time in many years stepped over the Soviet frontier. The Big Three reiterated their onfidence in victory and their agreement —a word of various meanings in the lexicon of iplomacy—about strategy and the timing of heir blows from East, West and South. Beyond hat, what else is the public to deduce from the communiqué? First, it is based on the fact that world military power will be concentrated in he governments of America, Britain and the U.S.S.R., and that future peace depends on their ontinued friendship after the war. So far he statesmen have given no hint what world organisation they intend; they are at present ontent with general promises of the "co-operation nd active participation of all nations, large and mall, whose peoples in heart and mind are edicated as are our peoples to the elimination f tyranny and slavery, oppression and inolerance." Sooner or later—and it would be etter if it were sooner—there must be some laboration, perhaps on the lines of Mr. Churchill's European and Asiatic Councils, of the organisaion in which the nations which are less strongly rmed than the Big Three will be invited to oin and play their part.

If we read the communiqué aright the present ecision is to concentrate on military victory, o occupy Europe and to leave all details of ettlement until they can no longer be avoided. As the nations are liberated and governments et up of which the Big Three jointly approve or about which they decide not to quarrel) these overnments will be recognised and their co-operation in their own regional affairs accepted. One disadvantage of this hand-to-mouth policy s that it excludes political warfare from the weapons of victory. Goebbels was expecting a oint pronouncement designed to divide from ach other the various groups into which the nity of the Third Reich is rapidly disintegrating. His efforts to anticipate such a declaration were o vehement and confused as to suggest eal dread at a political blow at German morale. But in the Allied declaration there is no "escape clause" or appeal to Free Germans, whether they are anti-Nazi by conviction, or have become so by a process of defeat and disillusion. By leaving the issue to force of arms the Allies risk perpetuating unity behind the military command. Dietmar, Nazi High Command spokesman, broadcast in manifest relief on Tuesday night. He said: "The announcement leaves us no choice but to suffer annihilation. To capitulate, therefore, will be to consent to our destruction." This is of course what the German High Command desires the German people to think. We must assume that the Big Three believe that the moment for making an appeal to the Germans has not yet come. At present we can only note that all nations, including Germany, are to have their opportunity of co-operating when it is judged that their people have also become enemies of "tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance." It will take Germany longer than any other country, except perhaps Japan, to "work her passage." If words mean anything, however, a Germany in which revolution has thrown to the top those who are enemies of tyranny may in time enter the democratic club.

"Scope and Timing"

In the military sphere the emphasis laid at Teheran on "concerted plans" encourages hopes at least that, in terms of global war, the efforts of the three Allies will be more closely co-ordinated. The assertion, however, that the Conference "reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of the operations which will be undertaken from the East, West and South" has curious implications. The period contemplated by this agreement is evidently the year 1944 or, more specifically, that year's campaigning seasons. Unless, however, we are to assume that strategic plans have been framed with extreme and (one would think) unwarrantable rigidity, the scope and timing of operations must surely depend in part on the enemy's future strength and dispositions. These, in turn, depend, first, on developments in the Italian campaign, and secondly—to an overwhelmingly greater degree—on the Red Army's achievements *and objectives* during the ninety days left before campaigning on the Eastern front is interrupted for at least six weeks by the Spring thaw.

Now, unless it was decided at Teheran that operations in the West will be begun so as to synchronise with the peak of an all-out winter offensive by Russia, Marshal Stalin must be planning his immediate moves on the assumption that, save in Italy, he cannot count on any major Anglo-American intervention in the near future. Balkan or Aegean diversions? Possibly; but except in the event of a change in Turkey's attitude (which, in spite of the publicised conference with President Inonu, is still improbable), the odds would seem to be against any considerable fresh call on German resources east of the Adriatic at present. As for Italy, all that the Russians will be able to discern is that a substantial British force, with a modicum of American assistance, is committed to a painful battle of attrition against, say, a dozen enemy divisions in a terrain which offers the defence every physical advantage. For reasons which may some day be explained but are at present unaccountable, we have apparently renounced exploitation of the one factor—command of the sea—which might have given decisive speed to this campaign. As it is, though the Allied troops are fighting with a gallantry and endurance which merit better weather and a more imaginative High Command, progress is bound to be slow. All that the Russians can hope for is that attrition on the Rome-Adriatic front may prevent further transfers of enemy divisions this winter from West to East.

The Choice for Russia

In these circumstances, knowing that the enemy in the East has already been, and may still be, reinforced temporarily from the West, how will Russia act? Having regard to the extremely high degree of Russian mobilisation, with its inevitable repercussions on production and distribution of foodstuffs and consumers' goods, Stalin may be inclined to stake heavily on an attempt to secure a decision, if possible, before next year's sowing-time or, at least, before the 1944 harvest. That policy would involve committing every available division to a general offensive this winter. He may argue that the tactical situation in the Ukraine and White Russia is sufficiently favourable to warrant such a stake. Alternatively, if he considers that the minimum Anglo-American assistance on which he feels bound to rely, before he can count with assurance on a decision, will not be effective this winter, he may resign himself to the view that the war will continue far into 1944. On that assumption the Russian Command might feel disposed to aim this winter at objectives attainable without total commitment of forces, thus reserving strength for a final blow when, and not until, the enemy is heavily engaged in the West. In short, there are obviously more variables in the Teheran formulas than the casual reader may be led to suppose. Neither in the military nor the political fields are the ends yet fully shaped.

U.N.R.R.A.

The further proceedings at Atlantic City cannot be viewed without grave misgivings. It is natural enough for the spokesmen of the occupied countries to feel vindictive about the Germans, and to stake out large claims for restoration and recompense for the losses which they have suffered. But it should be clear, even to aggrieved nationalists, that it is impossible simultaneously to insist that the Germans shall pay in full for all post-war relief, and that they shall make full restitution to the occupied countries while at the same time their industries are to be limited to what is necessary for the supply of the internal German market. This is arithmetic of the $x-x=x^2$ order: it simply does not make sense. If the Germans are allowed to rebuild their industries on a sufficient scale, they may be able to pay reparations *in kind* on a substantial scale: if not, not. It is hardly less a cause for disquiet to find an insistence at Atlantic City that any international organisation that may be set up under U.N.R.R.A. shall be confined strictly to relief, and that the process of rebuilding of Continental productive powers shall be carried out strictly under national auspices—each country acting on its own and loans being made to national agencies only and not to international bodies. What with exaggerated claims for reparations and economic nationalism in full blast we seem to be back in the mood not only of the Versailles Treaty but also of the nationalistic *sauve qui peut* which followed the Great Slump. On the relief side U.N.R.R.A. seems to be making reasonable headway; but relief ought to be closely linked with recovery, and it looks as if that link is going to be terribly weak. There is no co-ordination of U.N.R.R.A.'s plans with the American Treasury's project of an International Investment Bank, and apparently no willingness at all to think of European reconstruction in more than national terms.

Czech Assets and Paper Claims

The independent Czech weekly, *Nové Československo*, has rightly drawn attention to the appearance of advertisements in official Czech papers by a corporation wishing to purchase immediately an interest in "good industrial propositions, properties or acknowledged holdings, patents, etc." in Central Europe, and mainly in Czechoslovakia. Some Czech exiles, it appears, are mainly concerned with propertied interests in post-war Czechoslovakia at a time when one would have expected them to realise that liberation means, amongst other things, the chance for the Czech people to decide their own future. Having left Czechoslovakia before Munich, these people possess paper claims on such of their industrial and other enterprises as they did not succeed in selling for foreign cash before the occupation. They now seek to sell or mortgage such claims to British and American interests and have formed themselves into a "consortium" for the alleged purpose of "ensuring employment from the beginning of the revived Republic . . . and securing raw materials over and above those formally allocated to it by U.N.R.R.A." This "consortium" has now asked the Czech Government to give its official consent to the proposed transactions, and also to give a guarantee that it will in no way interfere with their subsequent execution. The Czech Government has already declared that it will not recognise any transfers of property which have taken place in its country as a result of Munich and has declared void the process of "aryanisation" by which Nazi capital has gained control of the economic life of Czechoslovakia. It should extend this policy to these new dealings and refuse to recognise transfers which have taken place in emigration. When the results of the dead hand of foreign finance in Poland, Hungary and Jugoslavia are remembered, we can support the reasonable request of *Nové Československo* that the future disposal of Czechoslovak properties should be decided only by the liberated peoples of Czechoslovakia and their freely elected government.

The Claims of Wales

We referred recently to the Government's refusal to receive a Welsh deputation which wished to ask for the establishment of a Welsh Office, on the same lines as the Scottish Office, under a secretary for Wales corresponding to the Secretary for Scotland. There is no doubt about the growing strength of the demand for this among the Welsh people. It is of course very much less than is demanded by the Welsh Nationalists—or for that matter by the Scottish Nationalists, who are by no means satisfied with a mere Office under a Secretary of State. The present Welsh demand seems to owe a great deal to the feeling that neither industrial nor rural Wales can hope to escape a return to the terrible depression which affected both parts of the Principality between the wars unless there can be a real Plan for Wales, designed to reorganise Welsh industry and rural conditions to some extent apart from the measures applicable to Great Britain as a whole. Rural Wales, for example, is very badly in need of local government reorganisation to meet the wants of its sparse and scattered population, which is now very badly served by local authorities with quite inadequate resources. South Wales needs special measures for the classification of its industries—the development of coal utilisation in secondary industries to make up for the loss of export trade, a growth of light consumers' industries to afford an outlet for female labour, and a planting of new trades to replace the declining tinplate trade of the Swansea area. There is already a Welsh Advisory Council on Reconstruction, formed by Sir William Jowitt; but it has no powers and no government department to which it can refer its claims. The case either for a statutory Welsh Development Board or for a Welsh Office and a Secretary for Wales seems to be too strong to be brushed aside.

Who Will Be Satisfied?

Major Lloyd George has announced in advance that the Government's new proposals concerning the mining industry will not fully satisfy either the miners or the mineowners. The real question is whether they will increase the output of coal, and thus satisfy the nation's needs. Unless they get rid of "dual control" and bring about a real unification of management, irrespective of divided ownerships as between neighbouring pits, they are certain to be ineffective, and to mean no more than the numerous plans of reorganisation that have already been found to be merely examples of *plus ça change*. Meanwhile, Mr. Bevin is to conscript by ballot 30,000 young recruits for the mines, and is to provide special training facilities for them before they go down the pits as ordinary workers. Ballot sounds a nice, democratic way of making the choice; but mining is a curious occupation, and it is difficult to believe that an entirely haphazard 30,000 adolescents, chosen without any regard to previous experience or education, will make an efficient or a contented force of recruits to coal-getting. It is easy to understand Mr. Bevin's difficulty, now that coal stocks are running seriously low, and voluntary methods of enlistment have admittedl failed. But need they fail if the conditions we made right? The miners are fearful of a retur to the devastating conditions of low wages an persistent unemployment that have pursued the ever since 1921; and this fear deters volunteer Why not meet the miners' claim for reasonabl guarantees of post-war earnings and employmen and then see how many recruits come for ward voluntarily? Because, say the objector if employment were guaranteed to one section o the community it would have to be guaranteed t others. Well, why not? What does "full em ployment" involve? And is "full employment" not supposed to be part of the Government' accepted policy? Or have we got it wrong?

PARLIAMENT: Off or On the Record

House of Commons. *Wednesday, noo*

Members were confused and perturbed by th unexpected publication of Field Marshal Smuts' speech some time after its delivery in a committe room at a meeting of the U.K. Branch of th Empire Parliamentary Association, from whic lobby correspondents were barred. Such un official and semi-official meetings "upstairs" are numerous; they deplete a thin House sti further; they are understood to be confidenti though not, of course, as rigidly secret as a Secr Session. If they are not confidential, membe argued, why should we not have come straig out of Smuts's speech and told the Press all abo it—together with our own reactions and com ments? For the unfairness of the procedu adopted here is that it gives one side only, th main speech itself, thus allowing the public assume that everything in it was acceptable to present. These grievances were not fully air in Shinwell's and others' questions and Attle answers. Attlee said that the speech had be printed at Smuts's own wish: strange, sin Smuts had been so insistent that he was mere airing certain lines of thought and did not wa to be held responsible for them afterwards.

Tuesday's discussion on the Labour Amen ment was one of the more coherent contributio to the debate on the Address. Hinchingbroo made a more substantial speech than he had ma since his young Tory firework started crackli He came out strongly for continued coalition a suggested that, as a substitute for party stri "the spur and stimulus which gave life Parliament" might be supplied instead by " deliberately contrived interplay between t Legislature and the Executive." The doctri that in defeating the Executive "Parliame invariably seeks its dismissal" was "anachro istic." Hinchingbrooke added that with t *Economist*, a copy of the *Republic* (Plato's, presu ably), "and a quick glance at the *Daily Express* one was "equipped to begin to put down in modest way a few simple Parliamentary Questions —an illuminating indication of the sources of To Reform doctrine.

Old Mr. Clynes, a hoary, frail and sligh pathetic figure, delivered a long jeremiad on u official strikes. ("It is the workmen now who not recognise the unions.") Alfred Edwar gave a necessary warning against "temporary houses. Mrs. "Babs" Wright (the prettiest H Lady in the House) disclosed that there were million people without publicly supplied wat Davie Kirkwood was fierily eloquent, as usu about Scottish wrongs: Scotland was a "dea trap" (but he strongly objected to the transf ence of Scottish girl workers to England). He a produced the ideal scripture quotation on t housing shortage:—

> Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air h nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to his head.

Winterton was another who spoke on hous with justifiable vehemence. (Every member inundated with heartrending letters from homel soldiers' families.) He also—speaking as a vete himself, and alluding particularly to Lord Croft quoted from Disraeli: "The Government still full of birds, but of ancient plumage; so are stuffed and some are alive."

When Jowitt came to reply to the debate, he was closely tackled on the important point of the actual machinery and staff that will be at the disposal of the new Minister of Reconstruction. There were, indeed, ten interruptions on this point, including the "unhelpful" observation by Aneurin Bevan that it was "a well-known device" to "use a man with a good reputation as a shock-absorber." It emerged that Woolton would be "a co-ordinator, but also an initiator," with a staff of about a dozen; Jowitt would be responsible for him to the Commons. Jowitt also coined the masterly understatement that the Government "do not slavishly copy" the Beveridge proposals; and gave influenza as the excuse for further delay in producing even the Beveridge White Paper. There may be, he explained, as many as three Beveridge White Papers (before the Government can begin to see "what specific proposals for legislation" can be brought forward). These White Papers will be exploratory, explanatory—and, in fact, every kind of—tory. This was all—Jowitt added, with the suspicion of a sob in his throat—all in the interests of "the ordinary man and woman in the street, the little man who has so often no-one to speak for him"—no-one but dear big grandma Government. Some Members turned slightly green at this; one murmured "The better to eat you with, my dear." Like a dentist deliberately drilling on a nerve, Jowitt then said, as cool as you please, "We have to be up and active and virile, and face a new situation." *Him* telling *us!*

One of a number of M.P.s who have had the genuine alibi of 'flu is the new Minister of Health himself (and if he and the King can't avoid it, it is felt, why shouldn't everybody have a go?). Miss Horsbrugh deputised for him at a fairly important question-time; she did so with *sang-froid* and resource.

This week's Astorisk:—

Mr. Jenkins: . . . and this is important—if the Noble Lady the Member for Sutton, would rest for a moment.

Mr. A. Edwards: Is it in Order for an hon. Member to keep up a running commentary, as several of us have had to contend with it?

Major Sir George Davies: We have all had to put up with it for 20 years.

Viscountess Astor: Hear, hear.

Mr. Jenkins: The Noble Lady is being a little kinder to me than to previous speakers, but that may be due to exhaustion.

Viscountess Astor: Not at all.

PONTIFEX MINOR

THE NEW POWER POLITICS

GENERAL SMUTS was clear about the facts of power nd about nothing else. He has been criticised or saying that France is "gone." It was an nhappy phrase which revealed that he was hinking of nations purely in terms of their apacity to mobilise a vast army and air force. t is no service to those who love France to enourage the idea that the country which has led he world's thought and civilisation can be rearded as negligible unless she is again mistress f a vast army on the Continent. That line of hought can only lead to the appalling picture f the liberated countries again pouring out ll their energies and resources to make themelves military States, in the knowledge that nly their capacity to bomb each other's cities an earn for them the right to make their voices eard when the Big Three are in conference. General Smuts would no doubt reply that he as not thinking, as yet, of justice or of any uture world constitution, but merely drawing ur attention to the basic fact that, at the end of his war, the old balance of power will no longer xist. Power will be unbalanced. It will be oncentrated. And on the Continent of Europe he dominant Power will be the Soviet Union.

In a revealing phrase General Smuts referred o this new power of the Soviet Union as "inexlicable." That he should not be able to undertand why Russia is now so different from the weak and overgrown Empire of the Tsars shows hat General Smuts has been out of touch with he most important events of our time. He realls no doubt the Russia of the last war with its orrupt court, its footling aristocracy and its ast illiterate population. Perhaps he has been nfluenced by the anti-Soviet propaganda that has ooded the press during the last twenty-five ears. Why should the Soviet Union not be trong? The great factors of power are all within the U.S.S.R. Here is a great area which ontains in itself all the resources required y a modern State. These resources are deberately organised for a social purpose by a ngle directing group of intelligent men. Its reat and growing population is inspired with he confidence of a rising Power which believes itself and glories in its own achievements.

There is no mystery to be explained. A oment of thought might reveal to General muts that the economy of a nation is like that a farm. If, on his estate in South Africa, e man in charge of his stock was working for s own profit in competition with the man in harge of his crops; if all those engaged on the rm were competing for the use of the land and ghting about which animals should be used for eat and which should be kept for breeding; if at the critical moment animals were turned out to graze on the growing crops; if, in brief, there was no directing intelligence to plan the estate as a whole and the motive of each man in charge was to make what he could for himself out of the resources of the land—in these circumstances would General Smuts expect good production and a well-run farm? Yet, quite simply, that is what the capitalist asks us to accept as the right way of running our national economy.

There are many reasons for Russian strength and for Allied weakness, but the first lesson which we all of us know in our hearts, however reluctant we may be to admit it, is that Socialism is the only efficient way of running a community. The progress of Russia has disproved every criticism made against Socialism as a matter of economic theory. So far from the Socialist State being extravagant and incapable of saving, the truth is that no country in history has ever remotely approached the Soviet record for thrift and saving. The consuming power of the country has been cut down to the bare minimum to equip the nation as a whole with capital assets. We may argue that too much has been sacrificed; we may complain that considerations of political liberty and individual rights have been swept aside in the ruthless pursuit of national efficiency. We should all agree that it has been a world tragedy that, owing to the external threat from the Capitalist Powers, the social purpose of the first Socialist State has been so unhappily diverted to preparation for war; that it remains excessively suspicious of everybody and everything within the Western Democracies; and that its natural evolution towards a regime of greater personal and political freedom has been retarded. But we are not sure why General Smuts finds anything mysterious in this story. A nation that has great natural resources at its command has found a social purpose and accomplished that economic and social revolution that every industrial nation must, by some road or the other, carry through if it is to be efficient. The result is that Russia is the most powerful nation in the world to-day. What else would anyone expect?

This great and yawning gap in the General's thinking goes far to explain why his picture of the world situation remains so incomplete and unsatisfying. He very properly attempts to remove from the British mind certain dangerous misconceptions. Brought up in the insular security of days when sea power spelled world domination, we are apt to forget that in comparison with either Russia or America, Britain is a small nation. The solution, General Smuts remarks, is not to be found in the conception of an Anglo-American Axis, but necessarily in an enduring alliance between the three Great Powers. But General Smuts does not tell us how these three Powers are to be kept together if their only link is their temporary agreement in wanting to destroy Hitler's Germany, nor does he give any indication of the position of the smaller and not-so-small nations that will, after all, go on existing in a world dominated, for the time, by Britain, America, and Russia.

General Smuts was so anxious to make us understand that "peace without power is a dream"—which is a truism—that he forgot to mention the complementary and equally true proposition that power without social purpose is a nightmare. Power is meaningless divorced from the wills of those who possess it. Referring to the League, for instance, General Smuts spoke of the lack of leadership. But he did not point out that the power of Britain and France in European affairs after the withdrawal of America at the end of the last war was almost as absolute as that of the three Great Powers will be at the end of this war. There was no lack of power at Geneva. Until Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, the combined Powers of the League could have kept Germany disarmed without adding a gun to their own armaments; they failed to do so, not for lack of arms, but because they preferred a strong Germany as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. No one doubts to-day that in 1935 they could have upset the ramshackle empire of Mussolini if they had desired; in fact they approved Fascism and praised the works of the Duce. They lacked not power, but common purpose.

Again, there is a second reason for the League's failure that is relevant to the problem of power after the war. After saying that the League was substantially a satisfactory organisation, General Smuts rather naively remarked that it was deficient in economic policy. This is very much as if an architect were to look at a new house he had built and remark that it was good, though unfortunately he had forgotten to give it foundations. Except in a formal, judicial sense the League States did not combine; they remained competitive Powers, each the prey to conflicting internal struggles, each striving to maintain its own sovereignty and the profits of its business people against those of other nations. The unemployment and economic breakdown which resulted were the final and disruptive fact which made Hitler possible and paved the way for war. In brief, the League failed not because of any insufficiency of power, but because it remained a congeries of sovereign States built on an out-of-date economic basis and run by people with equally out-of-date political and social ideas.

To sum up, General Smuts rightly says that the basis of our society is power, that power after the war will be concentrated in the hands of three great nations and that peace depends on their continued co-operation. To this we add: (1) that the strength of the Soviet Union is the result not only of its resources, but also of its success in building a sensible economic system. This strength is likely to grow in the future, while those nations that maintain a competitive system are likely to plunge through depths of increasing chaos until they too learn the rather obvious lesson that if you want social peace you must organise, not for individual advantage, but for public good; (2) that if the attempt is made to rule the world by three Great Powers without common interests or a joint purpose it will fail for the same reasons that the Powers that ran the League failed to work together last time; (3) that unless a constitution and organisation are evolved within which the nations, including the Great Powers, are prepared to work together, the world will soon relapse into a chaos of warring nations again, since every small nation will try to strengthen itself by arming against its small neighbours and to find support in one or other of the three Great Powers. We agree that, with the defeat of the Axis, the power to create peace will again be with us; but that is no more than to say that we have an opportunity if we have the will to use it

THE THREE KINGS

It rains declarations in which the heads of the United Nations proclaim their devotion to democracy. Such pronouncements are, indeed, part of the ritual of every meeting, like the ceremonial secrecy and the toasts. But three peoples, at least, as they read the last of these eloquent statements, from Teheran, must have asked themselves with some bewilderment what it meant. In Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece the United Nations display their loyalty to democracy chiefly by maintaining on their thrones Kings identified with everything undemocratic.

The most painful and dangerous of these discords has come to a head in Yugoslavia. The elderly group of exiled officials and politicians who claim to be the government of that country because they enjoy in Cairo the confidence of its young and inexperienced king has denounced as a gang of "Terrorists" the provisional government which Marshal Tito—the nickname by which Joseph Broz will go down to history—has brought together in the mountains he has won from the enemy. The contrast between these two groups is as sharp as it well could be. What services the exiles have rendered to their country we do not know, unless it be that with exemplary punctuality they have drawn the salaries of their sinecures. They may also claim that with perfect loyalty they have given their support to their colleague, General Mihailovitch, whose army has dwindled to a few thousand anti-Communist, pan-Serb "patriots," and whose collusion with Nedich and the Germans is no longer to be doubted.

This being so, and considering that the 200,000 armed men under Tito are engaging nearly as many enemy divisions as is General Eisenhower, unqualified support by the Allies for the Partisans (and this involves the repudiation of Mihailovitch) is necessary on purely military grounds. But the claims of Marshal Broz rest on a basis firmer than mere expediency. From the extensive territories his partisans are defending he has managed to assemble a council, composed of delegates elected, doubtless in a rough and ready way, by the liberated towns and villages. It is composed of Slovenes and Croats as well as Serbs, and it in turn has chosen a provisional Ministry of civilians. Many of these men are of high standing in Yugoslavia. They will be recognised by every student of that country as a representative and responsible body. While Tito himself, a craftsman by trade and a Croat by birth, who served with distinction in the Spanish International Brigade, is a Communist, his colleagues are drawn from all the progressive groups. The Ministry, in fact, constitutes a Popular Front which represents the active democratic forces of the three Yugoslav peoples. This is the first genuinely popular government that any resistance movement has created in an occupied country.

The Cairo Government thus stands in opposition to all that is courageous and alive in the nation. The clash is partly racial and partly one of class. King Peter's Ministry represents the Serbian imperialist tendency, which never would treat Croats, Slovenes or Macedonians as equals. It is also, in the class sense, conservative, and is opposed not so much to Communism, which in the true sense of that word hardly exists in this land of peasants, as to the very lively and enterprising co-operative movement, which fights the dealers and the usurers. The dynasty means something to the Serbs but little or nothing to the rest of the South Slavs. On the score of tradition and continuity, then, there is not much to be said for this young king. If, however, he rids himself of the emigré Cabinet and, above all, of Mihailovitch, and then induces the Partisans to accept him as King, a temporary solution which preserves the monarchy may be found. But if King Peter clings to his ill-chosen advisers in Cairo, or if the Partisans reject the monarchy altogether, the Allies cannot back the King without making a mockery of their democratic professions.

In Italy, meanwhile, in spite of the explicit promises made at Moscow, the Allies are seemingly still insistent on recognising King Victor Emanuel, with the Duke of Addis Ababa as his Prime Minister, as the head of the lawful government of Sicily and Southern Italy. With Amgot's jurisdiction replaced by the vaguer surveillance of the Allied Control Commission, the Allied Governments had to choose. The popular parties under Benedetto Croce and Count Sforza, which include moderate Liberals and Catholics as well as the Left, flatly refused to take office under King Victor or his son. Some of them, probably most of them, are Republicans; some wish to retain the House of Savoy; all were ready to serve provisionally under Badoglio as Regent for the King's grandson, a young boy, provided the ultimate decision between monarchy and republic were left to the people. The Allies are, therefore, supporting a king who has refused to abdicate in face of a demand that came from all sections of his people; on the other side there is only a group of officers and absentee landlords. But even this is not the worst. The King is ruling through prefects and mayors, all men of the old regime, chosen by Mussolini as a reward for their services to the Fascist Party. Save that "one man and one alone" has gone, there has been no change. What we are supporting with our armed force and our supplies is a monarchical type of Fascism, based on the old men, the old police and the old hierarchy of classes. All it has lost are the orations and gestures of the Duce, which were in this peculiar form of art amusing.

The Greek case we have all grasped; the present King has few adherents. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt dread social change, and wish to preserve traditional Europe. Given the ascendancy of Big Business on both shores of the Atlantic that is not a surprising attitude. But the refurbishing of these worm-eaten dynasties is not the war-aim of the common people of Britain or the United States who have made common cause with the U.S.S.R. in a war which they still believe is fought for democracy.

HUMAN NEEDS AND POST-WAR HOUSING

One of the few facts on which experts are agreed is that more than 4,000,000 dwellings will be needed in this country after the war. The estimate of needs is often higher than 4,000,000, never lower. There is much discussion on the question of priority building, but it is generally admitted that an exclusive concentration on house building would be neither possible nor desirable. Schools, hospitals and clinics are urgently needed; new estates must have shopping facilities. Housing cannot be treated in isolation, and any programme for providing dwellings must also provide for essential services for the people who are to occupy the dwellings.

Meanwhile the housing situation grows daily more disastrous. This war has already lasted as long as the last war; one house in five has suffered some war damage, and the work of restoration, where that is possible, becomes more difficult as all classes of building trade operatives are called up, and the elderly, the very young, and the infirm who remain must attend to such matters as faulty drains, burst pipes, leaking roofs and dangerous structures. Already our carefully established overcrowding standards (never very high for a civilised community) have vanished. Young married people live with the husband's or wife's parents (often there are two married sons or daughters of one household), and as there is a high percentage of youthful marriages and a rising birth rate, there is a return in many homes to the old days of a family a room. A room is sometimes the impossible third bedroom of the inter-war period, with a floor area of from fifty to seventy square feet, no adequate heating facilities, and no ventilating flue. When both the young parents are at home, as happens even now when the man is employed on essential work or is invalided out of the Forces, this position i intolerable. The alternative is frequently a har one: it means giving up cherished standards an taking rooms in an old house often no better tha the typical slum dwelling of the last generation. Occasionally the rent for such accommodatio is cruelly high, but the chief trouble, apart from the lack of amenities, is the bad state of repair. If the house has suffered war damage, it may have defects which are not easily remedied. Fresh cracks keep appearing, weak spots in the roof are revealed with each bout of bad weather, door frames drop and locks do not fit, and there may be people in the house whose standard of honesty is not what it was in peacetime.

If the homes for heroes fiasco is not to be repeated, house production at least at the averag rate of 400,000 dwellings a year for ten years wi be required. Even when all priority building i taken into account, there is nothing physically impossible about this figure. It is no harder t produce houses than to produce airplanes an tanks. It can be done by dimensional planning, standardisation, and mass production: thes terms are already nearly as familiar as Soci Security and Employment for All. Between thos enthusiasts who would have us believe that i U.S.A. satisfactory complete houses are bein "rolled off the belt" ready to be shipped an erected in any climate, and those cautious builder who will only just admit the advantage of usin some prefabricated units in the interior equipment of a house, certain facts and probabiliti emerge. For instance, that numbers of ne materials can be used in the construction of dr comfortable, pleasant-looking homes: that enduring, resilient, and easily cleaned interior surfaces are being invented; that good, practic designs for sanitary fittings, kitchen units an cupboards, as well as for all the smaller fitting required for a house, have been worked ou There are revolutionary but practical proposa for supplying not only flats, but all town hous with "background heating" and hot water o tap; great strides have been made in clea economical methods of space heating and ventilation, in designs for cookers, and in water heatin for individual houses. It can be said without fe of contradiction that there will be no need fo pipes to freeze in any new house in this countr and that plumbing can outdo the model child, an be neither seen nor heard. It is high time for suc changes. Compare the rate of improvement i the design of any machinery with, let us say, th kitchen range. Although there are improv types, the average kitchener is almost as wastef as dirty, as cumbersome, and often as temperamental and uncertain as it was fifty or a hundre years ago.

Are we going to have agreeable houses, lig and airy but warm, quiet, comfortable, economic and easy to care for, satisfying to look at from an angle outside and inside? We have brains t design what we want: the energy to overco difficulties: we have the ingenuity to invent ne materials where necessary, to adapt and shape will. We have most of the basic materials r quired for the making of houses. We shall ha labour. After this war, to make a bogy finance would be laughable: work, pay and hom for all means nothing if not that credits an subsidies are to be made available for the ma production of houses and their furniture an equipment. The problems which face us contemplating such a programme are subtl than the physical and organisational difficulti that must be overcome. Our 4,000,000 5,000.000 houses will cost a great deal more th money. They will cost us the continued an greatly extended industrialisation of this countr And if any person who thinks in terms of hum values challenges the word "cost" in th connection, let him ponder on the lessons of th *R.U.R.* and the *Brave New World.* Security employment, reasonable wages, improved fa tories, good canteens, music while you work— such is the glittering offer we make to industri "operatives." In return, the worker—man, woman, boy and girl, must give the best part of each day to monotonous, repetitive work, which, as mechanisation is perfected, makes practically no demand on skill or intelligence. Moreover, such compromises as a 4—6 hour day and the proposals of a few aware and well-meaning industrialists to teach crafts to factory workers who spend most of their time in machine minding, will certainly not come about if production is to be speeded up.

Let us face the issues. After this war there will be no lack of consumers for everything that can be produced. One of the first necessities is a supply of houses, and services and equipment for those houses. Almost equally urgent are schools, hospitals, community centres and other buildings. There is little hope of a home, or home life for millions of families in this country unless our resources, our intelligence and ability, and our labour are used to provide these buildings. We need the concentration and determination, the technical skill and invention that have been devoted to war purposes, and more than that, if the homes are to materialise. To achieve our homes we shall have, in full knowledge of what we do, to accept for many years a way of life which, for a large section of the community, is fundamentally unsatisfactory; for leisure-time occupations and amusements are no substitute for interesting work.

We must, then, be very sure that we do in fact have the homes which we know can be built. If we have standardisation, it must be standardisation at a high level. There is everything to be said for standard plumbing and fitments. No sensible housewife wants to express her individuality in a unique tangle of pipes in the bathroom, or in the shape of a window fastening or a keyhole. What she wants is that such things should be reliable and of good quality. Nor need standardisation imply monotony. Any schoolchild who has worked out some permutations and combinations knows the variety that can be achieved from fifty window units, or even from ten. It follows that if new materials and methods are to be introduced into house construction, competent architects and planners must be employed to direct their use. Equally important is the corollary that this nation must not be housed in one type of dwelling which is the proprietary article supplied by a firm or a combine for their private profit or advertisement. Whether the contribution from the public purse is a large or small proportion of the cost of any particular building scheme, the money must be well spent. Lastly, both in housing schemes where public expenditure is involved, and in schemes where it is not involved, it must be illegal so to cut capital cost that tenants are penalised by having to purchase their own fittings, and by being involved in heavy expenditure for upkeep, or for fuel to warm and dry houses which should have been provided with better insulation during construction. This provision means conformity to specifications carefully drawn up by the Government departments concerned, with the guidance of the information they have prudently gathered during the war years.

These are not extravagant conditions: they are plain common sense, and common honesty, if we are to keep the promise of "food, work and homes." But at present there is not the slightest sign that these conditions will be fulfilled. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton's speech in the House of Commons on November 30th contained the first pronouncement on Government policy on post-war housing. It was not encouraging. There was the ominous "what can be spent on these buildings) will depend on the amount of national savings that can be devoted to them." There was the admission of vacillation on the part of the Government as a whole over the second part of the Uthwatt Report, and the vague hint of schemes of "an emergency and temporary character." Another Minister might have made a better speech, but there is no sign that the Government have a thought-out plan for providing the homes they have promised. Housing has been regarded as a domestic problem, as one of those items in the programme of internal reconstruction which can be attended to later. But adequate and good housing for the people of Britain will not be achieved by any Government of this country acting in isolation. Housing policy is the symbol of, and the key to, our politics and our economics. Our politics and our economics depend on our ideology. Nothing less than a fundamental change in our scale of values is needed. What is the criterion? The best homes we can provide for human beings, or the meanest card-houses they can be forced to accept?

IRENE T. BARCLAY

CIVIL AVIATION: A PRACTICAL POLICY

THE article entitled "Will o' the Wisp" in NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of October 16th argued three main points: that civil aviation in the immediate future will involve a comparatively small number of aircraft, that free competition in this field will be dangerous, and that the development of civil flying has important military implications. If we examine these three points in detail we shall find that they go far to clarify the confusion that exists about post-war air transport, and that they point the way to a policy so practical that it might prove acceptable to the great majority of those interested.

The simple question of the *size* of post-war aviation is important because it is so often argued that the large number of aircraft, airports and personnel which will be involved, and the resulting complexity of organisation, will make the task of internationalising air transport an impossible one, in spite of the political and "psychological" factors which predispose towards an international solution of the problem. It is claimed that, however ready the politicians and peoples may be to pool their aviation, the omelette is too big and has too many ingredients to go into a single pan. This claim will not stand up to serious examination. The politicians and peoples will be readier than most people imagine to accept an international solution, and the omelette will be much smaller than most laymen expect it to be.

Even during the inter-war period the illogicality of the ownership by each nation of its own air and all the anomalies and inefficiencies arising out of it were becoming increasingly felt. It is easy after four years of war to forget what was the condition of air transport in pre-war Europe. The number of passengers carried yearly was much less than one-thousandth of those carried on the four British main-line railways, yet fifty companies of all shapes and sizes operated the air system. Between any two European capitals there would be anything up to six different competing airlines, which maintained their own booking-offices, administrative premises, etc., and which were unwilling to provide an inquirer with any information about their rivals. The difficulties which Imperial Airways had to face in operating their service to India and the Far East were paralleled by similar difficulties experienced by other airlines over the whole of Europe and other parts of the world. It was a growing realisation of the stupidity of these conditions which motivated the many bilateral and pool agreements that were made. Still more important, it was perhaps this realisation which influenced, in an indirect way, the very large measure of support which was received at the Disarmament Conference by proposals both for the full internationalisation of aviation and for air disarmament.

On the first of these proposals definite plans were put forward by France, Spain and Sweden for full internationalisation, and Holland and Germany gave conditional assent. It should not be forgotten that these and other serious proposals for the absorption of all civil flying into international ownership were opposed only by Great Britain and Italy on so-called technical grounds, of which Madariaga said that "technical objections often seem to be political objections in disguise." Indeed, it may now fairly be said that in the vital field of air disarmament as a whole the Conference seemed at one time very near to success.

Moreover, we shall have after the war many inducements to international agreement that did not exist in 1933. Ten years ago air power was no more than a warning by a handful of experts who were written off as alarmists: now the sight of rubbled cities and the memory of fear-filled nights are close enough to remind the peoples of the world that the threat is a real one. The necessity for ensuring that State subsidies to civil airlines are not for disguised military purposes is now universally recognised, even by the nationalist and individualist Society of British Aircraft Constructors. In their memorandum on *The Future of British Air Transport* (June, 1943), they envisage a controlling body established by the United Nations, one of whose functions would be to audit and publish statements of costs and receipts, in a standardised form, compulsorily submitted to it by all air transport operating companies. Any company refusing to render such a statement would be denied freedom of the air and the right to operate.

This proposal, though it does not go far enough, is in line with the fact that there must obviously be joint United Nations action in many fields, such as relief and rehabilitation, the administration of the conquered territories, and welfare and educational work, which, like air transport, are all "technical" problems. In particular, one of the great tasks of the United Nations administrators will be the reorganisation of transport systems which have broken down through damage to and destruction of roads and railways, rolling stock, docks and harbours, and coastwise shipping; and from this problem the step to civil aviation is a simple and logical one.

In any event, there will have to be an international body to revise the technical and operational standards laid down by the International Commission for Air Navigation as set up under the League of Nations by the Paris Convention. ICAN was the body responsible for the framing of technical regulations for air traffic, for the collection and distribution of information to navigators, and for the fixing of standards for such things as airworthiness, log books, signals lights and ground markings, meteorological information, statistics, methods of accident investigation, physical condition of pilots, etc. Almost the whole of this work will have to be re-examined after the war—again, of course, by an international authority. New work will need to be done on the codification of rules of the air and airports, load limits, crew certification, navigational and commercial documentation and maps, meteorological and radio codes, etc.

For all these reasons the desire for an international air transport system will be widespread. We now have to consider whether that desire will not be frustrated by the very size of the problem measured in terms of equipment and personnel.

We are at least beginning to see some sober reaction against the imaginative and inflated estimates which were being made a short time ago of the potential size of intercontinental air traffic after the war. So long as air travel remains very much dearer than the most commonly used forms of surface transport it cannot hope to capture more than the cream of ship, rail and road traffic. This cream has consisted, very largely, of first-class passengers who, with their baggage, pay about a hundred times more per ton-mile than any other form of freight. As R. H. Thornton points out, "the aeroplane will never be a cheap way of getting a thing or person from A to B. As a measure of effort and therefore of cost, take this comparison. An 11-knot ship can propel a useful load of 3.3 tons for one unit of energy. An aeroplane can propel only about 9 lb. Give the aeroplane, as in fairness you must, the value of its 200 m.p.h. against the ship's 12½, and the aeroplane in an hour does 1,800 pound/miles of work per horse-power. The ship does 92,400. Further, both the ship and the aeroplane burn petroleum. On a trip of 2,000 miles (allowing the aeroplane to stop half-way to refuel), the aeroplane will burn 2,040 lb. of fuel for every ton of freight it lifts. The cargo ship will burn about 23 lb. In a world whose petroleum resources are not unlimited, a vehicle which burns 89 times more of it than another to do the same job is hardly a welcome visitor."

Moreover, since the key to the size of post-war airlines is the number of airplanes involved, it is important to bear in mind that the increase in the average number of seats per plane much more than offsets the increase in potential traffic: between 1932 and 1941 the number of transport planes in U.S.A. actually fell from 564 to 485, because the average number of seats per plane rose from 6.58 to 18—and we are now designing planes to carry 100 passengers or more.

A careful examination has been made of the number of aircraft of about 170,000 lb. all-up weight which would be required to transport all the passengers who travelled before the war, either by air or by first or cabin class in steamers, between this country and points more than 1,500 miles away. This investigation took account of all the relevant factors such as seasonal variations on the traffic, serviceability of the aircraft, percentage utilisation of seating capacity, passengers' luggage, a certain amount of express mail, etc., and showed that the whole of this traffic could be comfortably carried in less than 250 aircraft. The largest single section of this traffic was on the North Atlantic route, and on this route Britain accounted for nearly half the take-offs and landfalls at the European end.

In freight the picture is even worse. The average cost of carrying freight by air has been about 40 cents per ton-mile, and the best we have yet managed is about 35 cents. The most optimistic estimate yet made of the post-war cost is 10 to 12 cents, and even this is based upon estimates of aircraft performance which are somewhat coloured. This figure compares with a cost of a fraction of a cent per ton-mile by sea. The cost of shipping 1/3 horsepower electric motors from Chicago to Brisbane by rail and sea is about 4 per cent. of the export value of the motors, and by air about 530 per cent. Once more the fuel bottleneck becomes apparent. W. A. Patterson, president of United Airlines, has shown that to transport by air from San Francisco to Brisbane the cargo carried by a single ship would require not only a large fleet of airplanes but also three surface tankers to keep them fuelled. In the face of this Grover Loening's estimate of a quarter of the world's freight taking to the air is fantastic —unless and until power-units cease to burn heavy fuel. Further, the weight of mail carried by air may be substantially reduced by the continued development of microphotography techniques; and the traffic in bullion, which was perhaps the most profitable item of air freight, appears to be threatened by the possibility that the physical exchange of gold will be abandoned as an important factor in international exchange. The main hope of air freight enthusiasts is the development of glider trains, but the technical difficulties in glider towing over long distances are still a long way from solution.

Probably 20 to 25 large airports would be sufficient to cover all the great circle trunk routes for long-distance intercontinental traffic with hops which vary between 1,500 and 3,500 miles. Similarly, the number of personnel involved would be relatively small—certainly smaller than the total number of people of the right types and of the right experience who have an international outlook and background. Because the offensive power of an airplane depends so much on its engine-power and weight-lifting capacity, the main trunk lines, using aircraft of 150,000 to 300,000 lb. all-up weight, overshadow the feeder lines from the points of view of both civil importance and the factor of security. The internationalisation of the trunk routes would be the thin edge of the wedge leading eventually to the control of all civil flying by the international air authority.

Here, then, are the broad outlines of a practical policy for the future of the air. There are detailed problems remaining to be considered: they include, first, the relation between this concept and that of each nation "hypothecating" some part of its own air force for international police purposes; secondly, the relations between an international air authority and an international political authority; thirdly, the composition and staffing of an international airline organisation; fourthly, the position which will arise if other countries (such as U.S.A.) refuse to take part in an internationally owned air transport system; and fifthly, the organisation of British air resources to fit into a partly internationalised set-up. These are important problems, but none of them offers insuperable difficulties; and discussion of them has been omitted from this article only because of space limitations and not because they contain anything to invalidate the general policy here proposed.

Ian Mikardo

A LONDON DIARY

I wish General Smuts had stayed in England long enough to reply to the admirable letter addressed to him in Tuesday's *Times* by Margery Perham. In the most polite terms she pointed out that his complaint about Imperial "decentralisation" could only mean, in ugly fact, that he was asking Britain to pass over our trusteeship for the natives of East Africa to "those few thousands" whites "who in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia have settled among the African millions." As to the colour problem, no one in this country thinks it "simple" or presumes to tell South Africa how to solve her racial conflict. But equally we do not intend to accept South Africa's solution—which differs little from a Nazi solution—as the basis of policy in areas where the natives still believe that we were not lying when we promised to apply the principle of equality.

* * *

What these words of General Smuts might mean in terms of human misery may be gathered from the evidence put forward last summer by the African Mine Workers' Union before the Rand Wages Commission. Only by accident did I stumble across this evidence in the columns of *Trek*, a South African fortnightly which has just reached me. The picture of conditions which the Union presented to the Commission is an appalling indictment. Forcibly recruited from their Reserves, partly by the refusal of Native Commissioners to give permission to emigrate except to the mines, and partly by the strangle-hold of indebtedness to trader-recruiters in the Reserves, 370,000 native workers work in and around the Rand mines for an average wage of 3*s.* 4*d.* per shift as compared with over 35*s.* per shift for equivalent white labour. The compounds in which they are quartered, and in which compound managers maintain discipline through a private police and spy service backed with the sanction of the sjambok, are grossly deficient both in hygiene and reasonable amenities. Hours of work, compound to compound, average 13 per day; the food provided by the mines is inadequate in quantity and revolting in quality; the maximum payable for permanent disablement is £50. At the end of their period of servitude, these native miners return to their Reserves, where they are compelled to leave their families, frequently broken in health by tuberculosis and venereal disease. "Kaffirs" have been a good market during the war. How many shareholders trouble to enquire under what conditions the workers live on whose labour their dividends depend?

* * *

With four candidates in the field at the Acton by-election, the I.L.P. hopes, I'm told, to ride to its first wartime victory on the present wave of Leftish sentiment. The Right vote will be split; the Mosley incident has deeply stirred the factory workers, and Communists are no longer telling people to vote for Mr. Churchill. Both Labour and Communist leaders have been finding increasing difficulty in maintaining their chosen role as upholders of the party truce. How infuriating, when popular feeling cries for leadership, to close an enthusiastic meeting with th injunction to go home and vote for those you'v been attacking on the platform! Now, I hear, th Communists, who have captured leadership i the Mosley affair, are modifying their attitude and advising neutrality in the voting while pursuing a violent vendetta against Morrison during th campaign. The I.L.P. thinks that the net result may be a large poll for Mr. Padley, the I.L.P. candidate, since he is the only Socialist standing. I doubt if such a situation can continue. Both Communists and Labour detest the I.L.P., and if there were an I.L.P. victory, or even a really impressive I.L.P. vote, I should expect to se the Communists standing in future by-elections. And if that happens official Labour, which fear Communism and does not fear the I.L.P., wil find it intolerable to leave the field clear for i most bitter traducers. The Acton result ma have far-reaching results.

* * *

The Union of Democratic Control is following up its highly successful "Questions" meeting on France, Yugoslavia and Greece with a bol attempt to cover a more complex and difficul group of countries. The platform will answe questions on "Allies in Albania, Austria, Bulgari Hungary and Rumania." To find spokesmen f the inchoate resistance movements of satelli countries is obviously a far more difficult job tha in the case of Allied nations. Where I kno enough of the "brains trust" to judge, I shoul say that the U.D.C. has been remarkably successfu in its choice. Mr. Ben Riley, one of the fe M.P.s who have long specialised in the Balkan and travelled there extensively, is taking the Chai Questions should be sent to the Secretary of th U.D.C., 34 Victoria Street, S.W.1. The meetin is to take place at the Livingstone Hall, Broadwa S.W.1, on Wednesday, December 15th, at 6.30 p.m

* * *

In a caustic comment on the circular issued b Sir Richard Hopkins to civil servants warnin them not to help Sir William Beveridge, the *Tim* remarked on December 7th that it was "drafte as though Ministers had some trade secret whic they are anxious to conceal from a competito some secret weapon against unemployment which the enemy must not know." Just so. Bu the common reaction is the one that the *Tim* attributes to "the cynical," who, "having regar to the lack of precipitancy which has marked th Government's attitude to recommendations alrea furnished at their request by Sir Willia Beveridge and others, might doubt whether th 'risk' that officials would have something to giv away about Government intentions could as y be considered acute." The following scrap conversation, overheard not far from Whiteha confirms the *Times* view. "I understand th Hopkins bases it on the idea that they may gi away the Government's intentions. (Pause.) It a pretty safe bet that they couldn't do that."

* * *

We can all remember first-class rows in th House of Commons. But we have never reache a point where members of His Majesty's Oppos tion have had to go up into the public galler revolver in hand, to subdue a riot caused b policemen there on orders from the Prime Ministe It sounds more like Gilbert and Sullivan or Be nard Shaw in an extravagant mood. But that is wh happened the other day in the Bolivian Chamb of Deputies, when Pedro Arce, the Prime Ministe was trying to explain the massacre of four hundr miners during a labour dispute last Decemb For a leader of a country at war with a comm enemy he had some remarkable things to say abo his Latin-American neighbours and about Stali "What," said a trade unionist with whom I w discussing this incident, "can we do about thin like that?" It clearly is not a purely inter matter of no concern to the rest of us. Th Falange, the Bolivian Fascist organisation, h its ties with the Spanish Falange. On the oth hand, both Whitehall and the State Departme

aim, with some justification, that they cannot
meddling in our allies' business. Unfortu-
tely the Nelson touch seems to apply with
failing regularity in one political direction only.

* * *

Scene: King's Cross, afternoon. Main de-
rture platform barricaded, a remarkably
lished train, officials in their best uniforms,
general air of personages expected. A soldier
me behind me in the knot of people at the
rrier, and, in a loud voice: "What's all this?
osley goin' orf for a week-end?"

* * *

I am told this story on totally inadequate
thority, but I think it has an authentically
hurchillian flavour. Mr. Eden, it is said, asked
e Premier, on the eve of his departure to the
oscow Conference, what he should say to the
urks. Mr. Churchill grunted. "But," said
r. Eden, "I must say something to Turkey."
he spark was lit. "Yes," said Mr. Churchill,
remind them that Christmas is coming."

* * *

Here is the latest underground story I've heard
om Germany. The Nazis are now offering
izes for those who can get recruits for the S.S.
nyone who obtains one recruit will be allowed
destroy his Nazi Party badge. If you get
o recruits you may have a certificate proving
at you have been in a concentration camp.
get three recruits entitles you to a Jewish
andmother.

CRITIC

CONFERENCE RUBAIYAT

[The beauty of the surroundings, the secrecy and
romance appealed to the imagination of everybody
ere—even the native porters of the Legation
peared to be going around in a warm glow—and
ust have affected the Big Three.—*Daily Express*,
c. 7th.]

ttend! For Allied Leaders meet once more,
hree Fighting Friends at one in Peace and War.
ere's news by Britain yesterday released
hich Moscow had revealed the day before.

escending from an air-borne Caravan
pon the snow-cooled suburbs of Tehran,
ected Leaders of the East and West
onvivially confirmed their Master Plan.

here the Big Three reshaped the World entire
cording to the democrats' desire,
t of the When and Where and Why and How,
ek not too diligently to enquire.

ough to know where Standard Roses swoon,
neath a brighter Anglo-Persian moon,
clined on carpets which the Shah had spread,
ey meet To-day to shape To-morrow's boon.

e timing of their Liberating Blows
t Cypresses nor Willows will disclose.
! The Tehran communique remains
uncommunicative as the Rose.

ough to know they drained the Brimming Bowl
d in the Wine-cup pledged the shining Goal,
d there, not unprovided with the Grape,
ch Leader was the Party's life and soul.

sometimes seems that never goes so fast
e Conference as where the Cup is passed,
d consecrated in the living Vine,
ch Toast is more eternal than the last.

ough to know they sealed their lifelong Vow
ith Ruby Vintage underneath the bough,
d in their Cups the Master Knot untied—
! Let this be Intelligence enow.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

**A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column
es to Sub-Lieutenant.**

**Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper
d give details of origin. Address to THIS
GLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

It is, I think, the refusal to let Hitler or anybody else interfere with the good old British custom of afternoon tea, which has kept our country undefeated when others had capitulated.—*Times of Malta.*

The milk supplied to Lanarkshire schools was excellent. There may be an odd bottle with a beetle or snail in it, "but that won't do you any harm."—*Glasgow Evening News.*

He tried to look like an Englishman by smoking a pipe and playing golf at the Wimbledon Park Club.

But he showed his Prussianism occasionally by talking roughly to his wife when she made an error at bridge.—*Sunday Dispatch.*

A 15-year-old girl witness in an assault case at Croydon yesterday was rebuked by the chairman, Colonel Whiteley.

He said: "I know about war conditions and all that, but this girl is in trousers, and I consider it an insult to the Court."—*Scottish Daily Express.*

NEAPOLITAN FUDGE

WE flew toward the great mountain and were only sure that it was Vesuvius when we were able to pick out the plume of white smoke upon the summit. The distances of blue gave way to colour. Soon the Bay of Naples shone in a crescent without blemish in the morning, without guilt, with the sober beauty of an ancient ethic surviving folly, weariness, war. The navigator began pointing out bomb damage.

We landed in a cloud of dust some miles on beneath the olive foothills of Vesuvius. The immediacy of war returned with the dust, drifting, feckless, churned and squandered by fighters, bombers, jeeps, ambulances, dispatch riders. It teases the hustle, patience, urgency of war. It settles upon trestle tables, blankets, windscreens, field telephones, craters, debris: but the body of it swirls always on.

This is Italy, so firm and fine and European to fliers from the south shores of the Mediterranean. This is Italy, the aggressor State, hungry for Africa, for fallen France, for subjects and, above all, for land. Toward the city of Naples we drive through fertile farm-land closely tilled. Those who stare are the young, timelessly poor, timelessly curious, but hopeful. The old, unconcerned, burdened sufficiently by time, stare at the weather, the horse's tail, the kink of village street containing the dusty wind. I have not seen Italy before, but the face of war I have seen in several countries, and I cannot believe that the environs of Naples into which we are threading owe their mean countenance to the brief horrors of war alone. The tatterdemalion façade of dirt, of shabby dearth, of penury, is pocked by shells and bombs indeed, but it advertises the meanness of a way of life rather than the devastation of war. London, Malta, Tripoli, have worse ruins. The misery to be seen, bare-footed, listless, quarrelsome, hungry, is a long-term product of Fascism only slightly conditioned by the ill-natured exit of an ally and the advance of a co-belligerent. This is the façade of Italy as I see it, dodging between the laden peasant carts and the supply lorries, and the families who are moving back, along the road to Naples where the notices in Italian, German and English on every dusty corner direct the traffic of war.

Lunch in the ornate villa which the Fascist big-shot left so hurriedly with a whole skin, and not half his wardrobe of uniforms, provides the contrast between reality and façade. Beneath the terraces which cover the spacious air-raid shelter, through a perspective of late roses and yellowing oranges is that crescent of the Bay again and Capri powdery soft in the blue noon haze. Virgil composing the *Georgics* may well have raised his eyes to this very outline of light and colour. In these latter days the Fascist boss has lived well, judged by his quarters and the feel of his cloth. His very small uniform caps with their gilt *fasces*, his wasp-waisted green-grey jackets, his little shining jack-boots, do not lack quality. His furniture is mostly new and pretentiously ugly. Bosomy or lowering Fascist art decorates the walls.

American friends of mine have taken over the place as a mess. Through one of the enlisted men (who is every inch American, but whose mother and father always speak Italian at home) an odd assortment of Italian citizens has become attached to this stately, if slightly comic-opera establishment. Luigi, with his constant air of tremulous exhilaration, is a star. He cooks, he prances to and fro in the marble hall as major-domo, he waits at table. The three women, the odd men, the stream of young girls and children, the ancients who lean forlornly in dim corners are Luigi's relatives and assistants. They are useful; they need food; the presence of each can be explained, but the Americans are a generous people. Neither his fellow-countrymen the Fascists nor the Germans did Luigi any physical injury. Indeed, Luigi would be dead from tremulous anticipation long before any physical blow fell. For years, until he reached the wrong side of middle age, he had a restaurant of his own; and his mother the concièrge was proud of him. His mother, however, occupied a pleasant position for one in declining years. The owner of the apartments which face the splendours of Naples Bay was persuaded that the mother of an ardent party member could better enjoy such a congenial old age, and Luigi's mother was ordered out at very short notice. Most tremulously, I gather, Luigi interceded and introduced his modest name to a black list. Very soon he lost his treasure, the excellent little restaurant we can just see from our balcony. As simply as that Luigi became a victim of Fascism. The only time I saw him annoyed was when one of the enlisted men stuck the little big-shot's gilded cap on Luigi's head. Luigi stamped on the thing and ruined much of its souvenir value for North Carolina.

The climax for Luigi now on any day is dinner. In spite of his theatrical acceleration of his own relatives in the kitchen, his gallop into the dining-room with the soup coincides with the evening air raid. He puts the soup upon the first solid object to hand, be it table, writing-desk, chair, or even floor; and then beats man, woman and child to the shelter.

Standing by the shelter entrance we watch the flying rosettes of our flak and the pulsing fire basket of Vesuvius behind the orange groves. When it gets fierce we prudently join Luigi, all the relatives, and all the neighbours. The only change suffered by this shelter lately is loss of exclusiveness. All the relatives and all the neighbours were not admitted to share the night starvation of the little big-shot.

The near one sent the villa's glass tinkling down on to the terraces and I found myself nursing Antonio, Andrea, and Maria. Their sticky hands dug into my battle-dress. Their tousled heads pressed close. Somebody struck a match when it was quieter and I found that they belonged to a mother who was already nursing four. The father had been taken away by the Germans. There had been no cruelty or violence. The Germans had been correct almost to the last. They had then simply taken men away and Father had not been hidden in time.

After dinner it rained and they all went home. All next day the dust was reduced to slime and mud. Naples sweated mud and our jeep slithered and bounded among the cobbles and craters. Along the town lines stood derelict trams. The interpreter whom the Americans were employing showed us black lists in a requisitioned Fascist building. A lady with a broom was sweeping them into heaps. Mud was being trodden in over them. The interpreter had hidden from the Germans, admitted that he had never seen an atrocity, "but up there in the north they are cutting off people's hands . . ." No, he had not met anyone who had seen that exactly—who ever met anybody who did?

There is lassitude about the rain in Naples. Two rollers seem to have been over a muddy pitch. The most active sign of returning life significantly is in the Via Roma. Eighth Army, Fifth Army, and R.A.F. men are shopping. There are luxuries to be bought and there is appalling junk. The prices for both are soaring. Somebody in this bewildered city points out that all the shopkeepers are ex-Fascists. Christmas is coming, however, and that intent look of these victorious troops tells me that they would buy from the devil himself.

JOHN PUDNEY

MUSIC

THE human voice, at least where choral singing is concerned, never seems to me to have profited by modern methods of production. Artificial instruments, whether blown into or played with a bow, have unquestionably improved in refinement and truth of intonation in the last two hundred years; but the experience of listening, some years ago, to the Vatican Choir, and, at the Boosey and Hawkes Concert last Saturday, to the Morriston Boys' Choir, suggested to me that choral singing has been developed in a way that has destroyed its essential and therefore most moving quality, very much as the modern organ (not to speak of the cinema variety) represents a debasement of the instrument as it was in the days of Praetorius and Buxtehude. These early organs which still exist have a cleanness and a pure individuality of tone throughout the register which are rare in the ornate monsters that now disfigure our larger churches. It is not only the grandiose pretentiousness of the 32-foot stops that is so dismally unmusical, but the extraordinary falsity of the tone (except in the choir organ), which is for ever trying to escape from itself into the characteristic timbres of woodwind and brass instruments—and for ever failing to produce anything but a note as inexpressively synthetic as the taste of a food substitute. In the same way I have always felt, while listening, with a mixture of discomfort and stunned admiration, to a full-blown tutti from one of the larger choirs for which England is famous, that I could dispense with three-quarters of this body of sound and even of some justness of intonation, for the sake of a more *genuine* tone—for some more than usual evidence that it was the human voice that was in question. Boy sopranos are always supposed to sound inhuman, but what struck me most immediately, at the Wigmore Hall on Saturday, was the intense humanity of these childish tones. It was the voice of the human spirit itself cleared of the blur of adult experience. The Morriston Choir is from Wales, which would be enough to account for the beauty of the voices and the rapt quality of the singing. These children's technique was not invariably equal to the music; but this seemed to matter little because it was so evident that they cared absorbedly for what they were doing. From this intent little cluster of most un-English heads issued a sound so strange, so innocent, so in the deepest sense religious, that it seemed to open a narrow window on to the Middle Ages. What a difference between the high vivid attack—as confidently shrill as a shaft of light—of these boys, and the calico-tearing shriek of a brigade of sopranos! Even when—as occasionally happened—they sang flat, the effect was not unpleasing, because it did not waver and so appeared intentional. They were in all essential respects the ideal choir for Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, which still remains one of the composer's most characteristic and touching works. These carols are utterly simple in outline and in economy of means; the subtlety lies in the progressions, the charm in the glowing melody. Brushing the centuries aside like a curtain, the composer has caught a vision of the mediaeval Nativity and given it to us with a directness that is startling. Two of the numbers are new since this work was first performed, just a year ago: "That yongë child"—a kind of recitative which weaves its spell by means of a double tonality—and an Interlude for the harp alone. This is a most original piece of writing which beautifully exploits the resources of the instrument. The plainsong melody is disguised by distortion into twelve-eight rhythm, swells out briefly, then fades into a wintry shimmer. I think the whole sequence gains immensely by the addition of these two pieces, which give weight and balance to the composition. The choir was at its best in the liveliest movements and in the "Spring Carol." "There is no Rose," in itself perhaps the loveliest single number, went for almost nothing; and in "Wolcum Yole!" the quavers in the third bar of the tune just weren't there at all. One hesitates to question a composer's own tempi (Mr. Britten was conducting), but I could not help wondering whether the whole work might not have gained by a general scaling down of the pace.

The programme was otherwise conspicuous for the admirably sensitive harp playing of Marie Korchinska and a most distinguished performance by the Blech String Quartet. Debussy's *Danse Sacrée et Danse Profane* is not among his most interesting works; but when played in this, the original, setting, the beauty of the texture makes up for the rather poor quality of the material.

Frank Bridge's Fourth String Quartet is the work of a masterly musician who was also no mean composer. I have often wondered why Bridge's work receives so little attention, while the far less distinguished music of some of his contemporaries is constantly foisted upon us. Here is a composer who never stood still, who perfected his own idiom, gradually purging it of foreign matter, until—in this Quartet—it stands out as something strongly individual and flexible enough fully to express the romantic imagination of its creator. Probably only a few in the audience will have enjoyed this emotional and at times over-emphatic music, but unprejudiced listeners cannot fail to have been struck by the beauty of the ideas, of the structure, and the real nobility of conception which emerged at the end of the Finale. This Quartet ought to be recorded—and by the Blech ensemble, which gave a vivid and powerful performance of a vivid and powerful work.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"The Childhood of Maxim Gorki," at the Tatler
"Saludos Amigos," at the New Gallery

This is the first part of the Gorki biography, and it confirms the impression formed after seeing *My Universities* (third of the trilogy) that here is one of the screen's most solid achievements. The leisurely pace is justified; Gorki was a nearly great writer, and his life involves a whole people and the emergence of one epoch out of another. We see him, in the early years, not only as a child loved by one person and beaten by another, but as the spectator of scenes which by their colour, harshness and terror awoke a rebel imagination. Perhaps the Gorki of the film is too much an onlooker, a young and puzzled seeker after the light; for it isn't easy to translate the first person singular of literature into terms of the screen. While he hides under the bedclothes or on top of the stove, his terrible and pathetic elders belabour one another, tyrannise, browbeat, cheat, even commit murder; and the child recoils and wonders. An old man after 40 years' service is turned out into the street because he has gone blind; a grandfather who has had to march over the sharp stones of the Volga bank administers dreadful floggings to the children under his roof; there's a great fire—no accident—when nearly everything is lost; the cruelty, superstition and slyness on all sides betray lives from which all real hope is absent. Only from his grandmother, a courageous and wise soul, from a neighbour arrested for "plotting against the Tsar," from playmates who form a rebel foraging gang, does there spring the possibility of futures less black. At the end of the film, leaving the fair-ground where the shouts of buffoons mingle with the thin wailing of beggars, young Gorki turns his back on childhood and goes out alone into the world. He prefers, as the result of his schooling, truth to compassion. The merit of the film lies in its fidelity to a remarkable book: anyone who does not know the volumes of Gorki's autobiography and his diary, available in the Penguin series, will be stimulated to read them. Many of the episodes and characters bite into one's memory; and like a chorus to this unwieldy drama of tragic squalor there is the Volga, stretching into mists, bearing away a friend into exile or a barge pulled by harnessed serfs. Alyosha Lyarksy acts well within the limits of the part, and has a look of the later Gorki, and V. C. Massalitinova gives a memorable performance as the grandmother.

A belated visit to the New Gallery reveals the firm of Disney taking a holiday in South America. Business, of course, is combined with pleasure; like *The Reluctant Dragon*, this film is intended to take us behind the scenes with the cartoon-makers. It never, unfortunately, reaches the same high level of fun and revelation, but from the rather commonplace travelogue, with hand-camera records in technicolour of a rare crudity, the film blossoms into cartoons of Donald Duck seeing the sights and Goofy miraculously transformed into a gaucho. The new fauna include a voluble green parrot and a music-sensitive llama—the last very funny indeed.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Berkeley Galleries (20, Davies Street)

This is the best exhibition of Oriental art that been seen in London for some time. "Oriental," say, because, though the exhibition is presented und the title "Goddess of Mercy Kuanyin in Chin Art," many of the exhibits are Indian; while No. presumably a twentieth-century piece, was, would surmise, executed in Europe. The collec of sculpture is particularly good. There are beauti examples of Wei and T'ang, and a stone head (some reason uncatalogued) which may be Sung a little earlier, and is perhaps the finest thing in show. Uncatalogued also is the choicest piece pottery, a Sung dish of incredible refinement. the collection is not as rich in ceramics as in sculptu though a case full of elegant K'ang-hsi figures is to please. As usual, it is in painting that the collecti is weakest and the catalogue boldest. Not even China, so far as one can make out, does a great deal first-rate, first-hand painting survive: in Europe the is very little. Naturally, therefore, we are all inclin to call Sung what it might be wiser to call Ming more scholarly to call seventeenth or eighteen century. Of eighteenth century painting there charming specimens, specimens which tempt one fancy that the spirit of that age must have pervaded civilised world, inducing men to make the best that very bad job—human life. Proceeds from sale of the illustrated and prefaced catalogue will to Lady Cripps's fund.

On Thursday next at 11 a.m., one may add, the will be an auction at 48, Grosvenor St., in aid the "French in Great Britain" fund, and among treasures are works by Picasso, Segonzac and Sicke

Baroque at the Arcade Gallery

Amateurs should make a habit of visiting gallery: it is too little known. The present ex bition, which would be a pleasure at any time, co as a treat to those who feel starved of good paintin For these minor seventeenth-century Italians—the are few great names here and fewer masterpiece could paint. Pottering through the gallery peering into the most conventional, the most manner pictures even, an epicure will be rewarded with taste of fine craftsmanship such as he may seek vain in standard exhibitions of contemporary What is more, some of these conjurers were arti too. Dughet, who came in for a deal of unintellig contempt in the nineteenth century (Consta knew better), is here represented by a fine, imaginati piece. So is Artemisia Gentileschi, the " mistress" as they call her: and, indeed, has woman painted better? It would be instructive confront the two pictures of fruit and glass by Ru polo with similar pictures by the Dutchmen obviously influenced him. The Italian's superi freedom of handling might remind us that an Itali when it came to the push, could generally be trust to sacrifice that niggling exactitude beloved of patro to the claims of art. The exhibition will be a tre for amateurs, and for scholars a happy battlefield the preface to the catalogue may be of use to lecture

MIXED COMPANY

Atheist and theist rub
Elbows in me as in a pub;
Lover lifts his glass to greet
Lecher; in the window-seat
Philistine and poet start
Arguments on modern art
And round the door the miser slinks
To cadge the cheerful giver's drinks.
So through heresy and schism
Works the world's metabolism:
From rotted dung the lily springs;
My devils preen my angels' wings.
Therefore when the miser goes,
The giver's open hand must close;
When lecher shows a pair of heels
The lover's burning blood congeals
And Philistine being bounded hence
The poet's music and his sense
Shrivel, and God, the atheist gone,
Turns to an idol carved in stone.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

Correspondence

THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT

Sir,—May I send you a few observations concerning Mr. Robert Powell's letter "Dr. Macek"? Mr. Robert Powell is in error when he describes as "misleading" Mr. Ben Riley's statement that "Dr. Macek and his fellow Croat Ministers only knew of the conclusion of the pact with Hitler when it was an accomplished fact." The pertinent facts are as follows:

The foreign policy of Yugoslavia has never been decided in the Cabinet meetings of the Yugoslav Governments. Its direction has been exclusively in the hands of the Crown and of a selected group of its Serbian collaborators. So, during the last ten years before the war, the foreign policy of Yugoslavia was, first of all, in the hands of King Alexander and, after his assassination, in the hands of the Prince-Regent Paul. This was so notorious in Belgrade, that every foreign representative, when he had to negotiate any matter of greater importance with Yugoslavia, knew that he had to deal directly with the bearer of the Crown. The Ministerial Councils, to employ Mr. Powell's expression, used to learn of the results only inasmuch as a formal act on their part was considered as necessary by one or both contracting parties.

Thus, in the case of the Tripartite Pact, the matter was dealt with by Prince Paul, who made use of the close vicinity of his estate to the German frontier in North-Western Yugoslavia for inconspicuous meetings with the leaders of Nazi Germany and with Hitler himself. Only when the matter was settled between Prince Paul and the leaders of Nazi Germany, the Prince-Regent informed Dr. Macek of the accomplished fact, invoking, in justification of the Pact, the reports prepared for him by the Foreign and War Ministers (both Serbs). In the face of this fact, Dr. Macek behaved in the same way as the Serbian leaders of the revolutionary Government of March 27th, 1941, behaved after the overthrow of Prince Paul. One of the first acts of the revolutionary Government of March 27th was the recognition of the Tripartite Pact and the communication to the representatives of Germany and Italy in Belgrade of the new Government's readiness to honour the Pact. Moreover, the new Government went even further, when the attitude of the Axis towards Yugoslavia grew increasingly menacing. They offered to the Axis Powers to send two of their prominent Serbian members to Berlin and Rome for a solemn reaffirmation of their readiness to observe the Pact. To placate Berlin, the most prominent Serbian member of the Government sent a telegram of greeting to his old acquaintance, Marshal Göring. If the Serbian revolutionaries of March 27th preferred to accept the Pact rather than precipitate the crisis with the Axis, at the moment when they were all-powerful in Belgrade, it is easy to understand that Dr. Macek adopted a similar attitude when he was faced with the same accomplished fact under less favourable conditions some time before.

I sincerely welcome and endorse Mr. Powell's suggestion that "the time has come when genuine friends of the Yugoslavs should show their friendship not by adopting partisan attitudes upon issues" between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. I am very well aware of his impartiality in dealing with Yugoslav problems. But I am afraid that, in his letter of December 4th, he has given a rather one-sided and not unimpeachable picture of a very important period in the history of Yugoslavia. Why single out Dr. Macek—who had been arrested by the Germans on the very afternoon of their occupation of Zagreb and has ever since braved the invaders, although his life is at their mercy—for accusations which are unjustified while, at the same time, keeping silent about the Serbian leaders of the revolutionary Government of March 27th, who went very far in their appeasement, and who are now not in German hands but in security in London?

Finally, I must add that the unfair and untruthful propaganda against Dr. Maček with which Mr. Ben Riley deals in his letter, has had, for two years, its origin in different organs of successive Yugoslav Governments; and that, in spite of my persistence, I was unable to induce the Government to stop this propaganda and to make an unbiased public statement on the matter. If Dr. Macek has been treated in this way while he is interned, it is easy to imagine what would be his position if he were in London.

Juraj Krnjević

Formerly Vice-Premier of Yugoslavia

COMMON WEALTH

Sir,—I am grateful for your kind comments about Common Wealth. But I think your doubts about our adequacy to the task we have set ourselves arises from the fact that with many other Socialists you are not sure what is the task to which we address our efforts. If it were our determination, so to speak, to "damn all the rest and do the job ourselves," then we would accept all the criticism that's coming. It is, as a fact, our rock solid determination to act perhaps as a forerunner to a much bigger development which we expect to arise out of the workers' movement, to act in some small measure as a stimulant promoting this development rather earlier than might otherwise be the case, and then to act as a colleague, ally, partner, or what you will, to this development when it does take place. I and many others have been sanguine about this sort of thing before; and we may all be disappointed again. But I think the whole situation is so developing that something on these lines must break out of it sometime in 1944. At any rate, let us hope so; and let us hope that those who are in a position to do so will not only speak but work for such a development.

Richard Acland

House of Commons.

ULSTER'S PARLIAMENT

Sir,—The letter signed "Jack Macgougan" in your issue of Nov. 27 is both misleading and untrue. The latter because I was one of MacDonald's sharpest critics, and am still a member not only of the Londonderry Labour Party, but of the branch of the British Labour Party which I was instrumental in creating. Your readers well know how to appraise the worth of a correspondent who lends himself to such prevarications. Not only so, but this is the first I have heard of him or his candidature—when was he adopted? Prof. Savory and Harry Midgley can take care of themselves, but is it necessary for me to refute the untrue personal references Macgougan indulges in without any basis in fact. Enough to say, therefore, that when Willie Walker fought Sir Daniel Dixon in North Belfast I was one of his band of helpers, and maybe Macgougan could tell you how long ago that was, and say where *he* was then! His concern for ex-Servicemen (is he one?) is very touching, but again the facts are against him, and, in 2½ years of continuous service of an honorary character for these men in Londonderry, 90 per cent. of my service has gone to the section of the community he suggests is penalised—there is not a word of truth in it. Midgley's action in forming a new Labour Party was taken without consultation with me, and I terminated my very brief connection with it, as did the Londonderry Labour Party, when we were convinced that it was inimical to the interests of Ulster's workers, in the widest sense. Midgley at his worst, however, is worth at least a dozen Macgougans, and is a man with a record of service to Ulster Labour which your correspondent will never equal. My statement on finance is correct—Ulster pulls her full weight on an equal footing with England, Scotland and Wales, but a Social Security Act based on Beveridge is only possible for her as an integral portion of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. That position is hers by right of the 1920 Act, and I hope she will never surrender it; nor can I think Great Britain will coerce her. Ulster's "dependence on Great Britain," as your correspondent puts it, is equalled by Great Britain's dependence on Ulster, and right nobly has the latter played her part in this great fight for freedom. If Macgougan's compatriots of the I.R.A. and Irish Communist Party could say that and point to record in proof, then his candidature

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JONATHAN CAPE

in Cromac would not be the hopeless thing it is. As a last word in reply to your correspondent, so far from ever attempting to split Labour's forces in Ulster, I have constantly urged on the platform and in the press, the vital importance of unity, even though that is extremely difficult with two subversive movements *inside* the party to which your correspondent belongs. I suggest the last sentence of his letter applies to this position, and he " can't have it both ways."

Londonderry. MITCHELL W. GORDON

THE LAND ARMY

SIR,—It would be difficult to answer " Ex-Landgirl's " letter in a short space. But the mis-statements should be corrected.

(1) She complains of " the entire lack of intelligent instruction." Having left the W.L.A., for which she thanks God, she is probably unaware of either the correspondence courses which any Land Girl can now take in such subjects as the Elements of Agriculture, Vegetable Production, Fruit Production and Crops under Glass; or of the Forewomen's Course which includes so many subjects that I could not possibly enumerate them here. She also appears never to have heard of the Proficiency Tests, which include no less than eight of the jobs normally undertaken by Land Girls. For all these examinations both practical and oral have been arranged for any Land Girl enterprising enough to take them.

(2) She complains of " the lack of money," probably not realising that one of the major and most successful efforts of the W.L.A. has been to put the wage position of women in agriculture on a better and more regularised basis than ever it was before. Here again, I cannot take up your space with the details I could supply if required.

(3) The grossest mis-statement of all occurs in the last two lines of " Ex-Landgirl " 's letter where she considers it " a damned shame that no one cares what happens to the Land Army girl now or after the war." I cannot here enter into the question of what is being done for the Land Army girl now but I can at least inform your correspondent that much thought has been given to what will happen to her after the war. One of the objects of the Women's Land Army Benevolent Fund now being raised is to supplement the Government's general post-war training scheme and to provide training for any Land Girl who needs it either to enable her to stay on in agriculture or to fit her to earn her living in some other industry or profession.

Now for the second letter from " Landgirl," evidently a thoughtful and sensible person, though even she falls into self-contradiction, e.g., she complained in her first letter that Land Girls were being left to develop into amoral beings, yet in her second letter she complains of their being given a lecture on hygiene and the symptoms of V.D. However, let that pass. I would like only to complain in return that fault finders are so rarely constructive. If only " Landgirl " would give us her views on what should be done!

Let me end up by saying that I am entirely in agreement with her when she remarks that members of the W.L.A. are doing hard and splendid work and ought to be given more appreciation than has been given them so far. So greatly am I in agreement, that I am now personally engaged in writing an account of the W.L.A. from its inception to the present day. This will be published under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and not only will all the profits be handed over to the Benevolent Fund for the present and future benefit of Land Girls, but I also and sincerely hope that it may bring " The Cinderella " of the women's Services into a more vivid recognition by the public. V. SACKVILLE-WEST

BRAILLE

SIR,—As I am responsible for all the statements about Braille in Dr. Joad's article, I should like to make a few remarks in reply to Mr. Rowley's letter.

Let me say at once that I made a bad slip about the date of the invention of Braille—I was thinking of the date when Braille printing began in this country. Having made this confession, I should like to deal with some of Mr. Rowley's criticisms. His letter suggests that he is doubtful about the book being taken down in Braille shorthand. Briefly the facts are these. My intention was to transcribe the book into Braille in the ordinary way from dictation, but owing to the fact that the book was out of print, I had to borrow it from the Public Library. I could not keep the copy indefinitely, so hit on the plan of having it dictated and taking it down in shorthand (Braille shorthand can be written at 120 words a minute). Having done this I could return the book to the library and transcripe my notes at leisure. If a sighted person was transcribing Braille, he would be able to copy a whole page without lifting his hands from the keys, while with the Braille shorthand I am forced to read a few words and then copy them. I showed Dr. Joad this process; hence his reference to memorising. The article was in no sense a technical account of Braille; it was simply the record of an informal talk on a subject on which the author had little previous knowledge.

Mr. Rowley may not be aware that in the last century the Americans had a different alphabet from ours. One can only describe the position to one knowing nothing about Braille by saying that one letter in English Braille would stand for a different one in American: this would naturally suggest the idea of " loops and twists " to the reader of ordinary print. Since then there has been steady progress towards uniformity, till now we have the Standard English Braille in both countries. I must point out, however, that we have had to give up our contractions for God, Jesus, and several other words which are specially connected with theology. I do not think Mr. Rowley is himself a Braille reader, so perhaps he has not realised this.

The story about " Hamlet " is perfectly true, and the pupils concerned were not small children, but aged from 16 to 18. There is no suggestion that the books were censored by the publishers—obviously if the dots had not been printed in the first place they could not have been erased and then pushed up again. It was the school authorities who in those somewhat distant days censored books before they reached the hands of the pupils. X.

" SPORT OR FOOD ? "

SIR,—If space permitted, it would be possible to reply to Mr. George Long's article on " Sport or Food," paragraph by paragraph, but in view of the fact that he publishes the apocryphal stories of the landowner who preferred thistles to corn (even game do not prefer thistles) and the veto on householders giving hospitality to travellers, and goes back over 150 years for alleged atrocities, it would hardly be worth while.

The whole of his one-sided attack on sport breaks down by his own admission that the main cause of what he calls an " indefensible position " was the long period of agricultural depression between the wars. This in a nutshell is the key to the lack of prosperity of many rural areas and is not confined to Scotland; and indeed earlier depressions than the between-the-war period have all contributed to rural unsettlement. As a fact, sport and agriculture are complementary and go well hand in hand. Well-kept grouse moors are ideal for sheep and are so used. Large areas given over to deer forests have been proved time and again to be quite useless for any agricultural purposes and would long ago have been used differently had there been any prospect of success. To suggest that rabbits are kept for sport is fantastic, unless it is the farmers themselves whom the author is accusing.

The truth is that in the hard times long before the 1914–18 war, landowners found that although returns for agriculture no longer sufficed to keep farm buildings in order or farm hands in employment, the letting of the sporting rights went a long way towards giving employment to thousands of workers who otherwise, owing solely to agricultural depression, would have been added to those who had already been forced to seek their livelihood elsewhere.

JAMES W. FITZWILLIAM,
British Field Sports Society, Secretary
High Street, Petworth.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"ON n'a jamais peint les exigences de la ueule." One stops dead at this brutal sentence *Le Cousin Pons*. What on earth has poor Pons one that his fastidious habit of dining at the xpense of his better-off relations should be escribed in terms of bestial law? Comically escribed, of course; Balzac examined the dossier f human nature with the quizzical detachment f a Chief of Police, who is going rapidly up in e world; who has seen so many cases; who anks heaven that he does not make the moral w and that an imperfect Church stands between imself and the Almighty. Passion, even when it a passion for the best food, always becomes— the experience of the Chief of Police—a transction; Pons trades the little errands he runs n behalf of the family for the indispensable urprises of the gourmet. In the pursuit of that ppetite he is prepared to ruin himself where ther men, more voluptuously equipped by ature, will wreck themselves in the capture nd establishment of courtesans. Sex or food, oney or penury, envy or ambition—Balzac nows all the roads to ruin. If only men and omen were content with their habits instead of aving for the sublimity of appetite.

I've been reading the two Cousins lately, *Le ousin Pons* and *La Cousine Bette*, in which alzac studied the phenomenon of the poor elation. And there, in that isolation of a type, e detects the main difference between the rench and English novels. The English novel as never lived down its early association with the eatre, and has always had to wrestle with a icaresque or artificial plot. But even if this had ot been so, we could never have been a nation f moralists. Our instinct is to act; our interest morals is a practical interest in results. The rench novel—and how obvious this is in Balzac— dominated on the contrary by a sense of law. ehind the individual lies the type, behind the t lies a law governing the act. The French ovelists are the lawyers of the passions; they roceed from the prototype to the particular and en carry it back for comparison. Subtle and igious in tactic, they are imperturbable in their onclusion that human experience, however izarre, however affecting, can never escape the eep inscription of its category or evade the rdinance of some general idea.

To an English taste there must always be someing arbitrary in such a structure. Natural rotestants, we resist a determinism so Roman nd so Catholic. But we must be abashed by the ouble reference in which French fiction is so ch. Look at the delightful Pons. His character as so many departments. He is an old man, an gly man, an outmoded but respected musician, dandy survived from an earlier period, a ollector of antiques, a poor man, a careful man, simple man who is not quite so simple—see his luable collection of pictures and bric-a-brac nningly picked up for next to nothing—a xless man, a gourmet, a hanger-on, shrewd in s own world, lost in the society into which he s grown up. Pons is the kind of character who, evitably, becomes fantastic in the English novel mply because no general laws pin him down. e would become a static "character." Balzac kes all these aspects of Pons and mounts each e, so that Pons is constructed before our eyes. e have a double interest: the story or plot, hich is excellent in suspense, drama and form— is must be one of the best constructed of Balzac's ovels, as it is also one of the most moving—and e exact completion, brick by brick, of Pons and s circle. There are the historical Pons—he is an *croyable* left over from the Directoire—the tistic Pons, the financial Pons, the sociable Pons, e moral Pons, and in the end Pons dying, undered, defiant, a man awakened from his mplicity and fighting back, the exquisitely umble artist turned proud, sovereign and ngerous in his debacle. Pons is a faceted stone, d part of the drama is the relation of each facet th the others. Thus his fantastic dress is related, via dandyism to, his small, esteemed, but out-of-date position in the world of art. That adjoins his love of good living—picked up in smarter days—which links up with his solitariness, the social spryness of the bachelor, his timidity and his sexual innocence. We have the portrait of a man who in every trait suggests some aspect of the society in which he lives. The history of his time is implicit in him. Yet he is not a period piece. A period piece is incapable of moral development and the development of a moral theme is everything in the novels of Balzac, who facilitates it by giving every character not merely a time and place, but also an obsession. Among English novelists it is only Henry James and, on occasions, Meredith, who move their drama not from incident to incident, but from one moral situation or statement to the next. (In Meredith's *The Egoist* one recalls the tension that precedes the accusation: "You are an egoist.") So it is with the story of Pons. He is snubbed by his ignorant relations who do not realise even the financial value of his collection of antiques and pictures. In consequence, rather than be dropped or ridiculed, he gives up his beautiful dinners and retires to taste the blessings of the concierge's motherly cooking and pure friendship with the delightful Schmucke, a man even more simple than himself. At that point an English novelist might have given up. The lesson was clear. But Balzac, like Henry James, saw that drama lies in the fact that there is no end to moral issues. For him—re-complication, further research. And so, just as Pons is getting a little tired of his landlady's cooking, society tempts him again. His relations apologise, and Pons is one of those good men who cannot bear other people to say they are in the wrong. He conceives a grandiose scheme for returning good for evil. He will find a husband for the unmarriageable daughter. He will announce the enormous value of his collection and leave it to her in his will. Result, gratitude? Not a bit of it. The family is longing to wipe out the memory of their humiliating apology by vengeance, and when the marriage scheme collapses, they finish with Pons. Once more we have come to a natural end of the novel. But once more Balzac re-complicates. Pons falls into the grip of his concierge, who has suddenly become covetous now that she has two harmless, childless, womanless old men in her power; and his downfall is ensured by the very innocence of Schmucke, who cannot believe evil of anyone.

Balzac is the novelist of our appetites and obsessions, but his great gift—it seems to me—is his sense of the complexity of the human situation. He had both perceptions, one supposes from his peasant origins, for among peasants, as he was fond of saying, the *idée fixe* is easily started; and their sense of circumstance overpowers all other consideration in their lives. A character in Balzac is so variously situated in history, in money, in family, class and in his type to begin with; but on top of this, Balzac's genius was richly inventive in the fecund ground of probability. This simply means that Balzac knew his people as few novelists ever know their characters. The marriage scene in *Le Cousin Pons*, for example: there we have the rich German all set to marry the daughter of the family. The awful facts of the "régime dotal"—a phrase repeated in pious chorus by the family with the unction usually reserved for statements like "God is Love"—have been accepted by him. He has merely to say the word. At this tense moment the German electrifies everyone by asking another, and not the unexpected question: Is the girl an only child? Yes, she is. Then he must withdraw. A man of forty is an idiot who marries a girl who has been spoiled in her childhood. She will use the fact that he is so much older than herself to prove she is always right. That way lies hell. The respectability of the institution of marriage is in itself no satisfaction.

But *Le Cousin Pons* moves from one surprising probability to the next, backed by the massed ranks of human circumstance. The change in the character of the charming, motherly landlady of Pons who suddenly takes on the general professional character of the concierges of her district creates another powerful situation—powerful because so isolated are we, so obsessed with possibility and hope, that the probable is unperceived by us. The last thing we care to believe is that we are governed by type and environment. Balzac believed nothing else.

I do not know that I would put anything in *Le Cousin Pons* above the first part of *La Cousine Bette*, though I like Pons better as a whole. Pons is the old bachelor. Bette is the old maid. The growth of her malevolence is less subtly presented than the course of Pons's disillusion, because Balzac had the genius to show Pons living with a man even simpler than himself. One sees two degrees of simplicity, one lighting the other, whereas Bette stands alone. She is best in her obscurity, the despised poor relation, the sullen peasant, masculine, counting her humiliations and her economies like a miser, startling people with her bizarre reflections. They laugh at her and do not conceive the monstrous fantasies of her painful virginity. And we are moved by her in these early pages when she is hiding her Polish artist, shutting him in his room like a son, driving him to work; or, later, when Madame Marneffe gives her her shabby furniture. Bette is a wronged soul; and when her passion does break it is, as Balzac says, sublime and terrifying. Her advance to sheer wickedness and vengeance is less convincing or, rather less, engrossing. It is a good point that she is the eager handmaid and not the igniting cause of ruin; but one draws back, incredulously, before some of her plots and lies. Acceptable when they are naive, they are unacceptable when they fit too efficiently the melodramatic intrigue of the second part of the book. But the genius for character and situation is here again. La Marneffe, rooted in love's new middle-class hypocrisy and growing into a sanctimonious courtesan, is nicely contrasted with the besotted baron who had grown up in an earlier period—"between the wars" in fact—when the fashion of love was brisker and more candid. That situation alone is a comic one. The diplomatic farce of La Marneffe's pregnancy is brilliant. The lies and short repentances of the sexagenarian Baron are perfect. Only Adeline does not, to my mind, come off in this novel; and here we come upon Balzac's rather dubious advocacy of marital fidelity. He sounds as little convinced as a public speaker haranguing his way to conviction. Adeline's pathetic attempt to sell herself, in order to save her husband's fortunes, is embarrassing to read; are we to admire virtue because it is stupid? Balzac protests too much.

No one has surpassed Balzac in revealing the great part played by money in middle-class life; nor has anyone excelled him in the portraits of the parvenu. Henry James alone, coming at the zenith of middle-class power, perceived the moral suasion of money; but money had ripened. It glowed like a peach at the point of corruption. Balzac arrived when the new money, the new finance of the post-Napoleonic world was starting on its violent course; when it was an obsession and was putting down a foundation for middle-class morals. In these two novels about the poor relation, he made, it seems to me, his most palatable, his least acrid and most human statements about this most grotesque period of middle-class history.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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KEEP THE EYE DOWN!

Some Talk of Alexander. By ROGER GRINSTEAD. *Secker and Warburg.* *7s. 6d.*

The Guards are a special case. Escort and bodyguard to the tribal chieftain, adornment of his capital city, and distinguished from the rest of his army by the savage splendour of their costume and the length of their limbs—the prestige of their status and the solemn nature of their public ceremonial impose upon them obligations and exertions of a highly exemplary kind. They are the *premier corps de ballet militaire*, and a perfection of appearance and performance is required of them which can never be completely achieved. The child, moving his metal soldiers on parade dreams of the day when they will be flesh and blood: forty years later when, as a colonel in the Household Brigade of Guards, he has his heart's desire, he may wish them back to metal again. "Very good," said the Grand Duke Mikhail despondently, after keeping his troops for an hour at the "present," "only *they breathe!*"

Such remarkable virtuosity as might have been seen in peacetime in Whitehall or through the railings in Birdcage Walk, how was it produced and doubtless it was highly paid? Ask the miner, the ploughboy, the apprentice who, having been sucked into the notorious factory at Caterham, were sausaged out, after six months, identical in appearance, gait, language, discontent, craftiness, penury and thirst. In a recent book that deafens one in the reading, Mr. Gerald Kerch also provides the answer—albeit an answer which, since it is romantically sauced, is more likely to please the bosses than the bossed. It is, indeed, a war-time Caterham of which Mr. Kerch writes, when the period of training has been reduced and other reluctant modifications and concessions made; but the emphasis is still the same: spit-and-polish, drill, unquestioning obedience to orders—"You're not paid to think!" For the salival gum that has been expended for year; both on burnishing the boots and cohering the squad on the parade ground is seen to have had a stickier purpose: will it not glue the line together on the field of battle, too?

What is the evidence that the Guards are better, braver fighters than any other regiment that has less drilling, polishing and general chasing about to put up with? What is the evidence that you do die more gallantly with your boots clean, or that that fine end of Guards' discipline, Mr. Kerch's sergeant, who stands rigidly to attention and salutes when he speaks to an officer on the telephone, is the best answer to modern warfare? These dark questions may seem to have little to do with Mr. Roger Grinstead's book, which calls itself a novel, but is mainly a piece of reporting, lively, witty and malicious, on life in a Guards' Training Battalion as viewed from below. And yet they are inherent in the comic opera he makes of it all. There is a fascinating book yet to be written which will examine and compare the various codes of military discipline evolved by the various nations participating in the present struggle out of their respective cultures and political ideologies, and evaluate their relative success on and off the field. Whatever kind of discipline, and how much, Mr. Grinstead may think it necessary to impose upon our citizen army, he clearly does not like the brand and the amount provided by the Guards. He does not, that is to say, believe in a discipline which, however much the card of regimental pride may be played to offset it, he sees as based on fear, where the emphasis is on punishment rather than praise, where promotion depends primarily on the power of the vocal cords, where men are regarded more as numbers than as rational and sentient human beings with personal potentialities and private lives, and where the hierarchical system is so strong that a man may not speak to an officer without a prefatory "Thank you for leave to speak, sir," and N.C.O.s and men are strictly prohibited from fraternising. Since he is obviously Leftist in his views, he would no doubt say that it is only in countries like our own, where tradition is so deep and social inequality so wide, that such a system could prevail, and he would doubtless prefer—as who would not?—an army so inspired by some common faith or ideal that it required scarcely any discipline at all. It is true, no doubt, that when discipline comes in at the door, justice is apt to fly out of the window, for it is at least convenient, under discipline, that authority should be always right; and the stricter the discipline, the more frequently justice goes over the sill. Mr. Grinstead sees the Guards, in short, as a regiment in which there is so much "bluffing the way," "keeping the eye down" and "skiving" that life resembles more a game of hide-and-seek or catch-as-catch-can than a serious and resolute preparation for war. In such a corruptive, fault-finding, fear-ridden atmosphere, he asks in effect, what are a man's chances of remaining decent when he accepts authority? and as a corollary, how can he hope or care to lead others unless he has their confidence and esteem? In contrast to Mr. Kerch's N.C.O.s who all, beneath their rough, bluff exteriors, have hearts of gold, Mr. Grinstead's are mostly bullies, braggarts or sycophants, despised, feared or hated by those beneath them.

Martin Roule, Mr. Grinstead's hero, undergoes this painful process of rising from the ranks. Accidentally and against his inclinations—for unless they are ambitious for power, guardsmen usually see nothing but disadvantage in "taking the tapes"—he is made a corporal. He is an idealist, and determines to be "different"; he will not get corporalitis; he will not chase, book or take advantage of the men, but defend them and their rights, and retain their friendship and respect. But the scales are too heavily weighted against him; in the end it is subtly indicated that he has gone bad; the system has produced just another petty disciplinarian. And as a background to the sad decline of this nice, rather weak, young man, his erstwhile mates—cleverly undifferentiated except physically, for guardsmen are not permitted personality—keep up a remorseless chorus of cynical and bawdy badinage. In spite of its appearance of farce, the book is fundamentally serious.

If war is to be praised at all, one of the good things about it is that it leavens the normally inarticulate ranks with that disturbing and officially discountenanced creature, the critic. Mr. Grinstead's scene is so closely and convincingly observed that one cannot but suppose that he has been through the experience he describes, and that his book is to some extent autobiographical. Is it fair? The author is clearly an intelligent and sensitive man; but he is too "browned off" and, one senses, too politically prejudiced, to be able to regard his subject with entire detachment. No doubt there is a good deal of obsolete nonsense—the inelastic parade ground ideal—still clung to with varying degrees of persistence by individual commanders in the Guards, with a consequent comparative failure to recognise the feelings and conveniences of the men; but Mr. Grinstead is so deeply disgusted with the whole antiquated, undemocratic system, as he sees it, that he falls into similar error himself, and such officers as saunter lackadaisically into his pages are all represented as ninnies, snobs or numskulls. But, no doubt, Mr. Grinstead would reply to this that since the system precludes him from getting to know them properly, how is he to tell *what* they are like. At any rate, as was said in the beginning, the Guards are certainly a special case, and Mr. Grinstead has written a lively and provocative book about them.

CHARLES O'HALLORAN

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DECLARATIONS OF RIGHTS

The Rights of Man. With an Introductio
H. G. WELLS. *Poynings Press.* *3d.*

The Rights of Man—one would be tempte
say "Mr. Wells's Rights of Man," but is dete
by his insistence that he is "only in the m
subordinate degree a contributor"—has now b
published as a pamphlet with an introduction
H.G. giving "a plain account of the id
Part of the introduction is devoted to explai
why the effects of the original document w
smaller than might have been expected. T
Rights of Man, it will be remembered, w
announced in the far-off days of the Sitzkreig
clarify for ourselves and to others the iss
for which we were fighting. The announcem
caused a considerable stir. It was as if a great st
had been dropped into the stagnant pools
men's minds, and there was a great scurrying
and fro of the little fishes of their ideas. A
then the whole affair was forgotten; the st
had sunk to the bottom; sunk, apparently, i
the mud. Why was that? The question g
Mr. Wells and his fellow workers much conc
There were, of course, obvious defects in
original statement. The political article,
example, was modelled too closely upon
Parliamentary systems of the West; the Decl
tion made no appeal to Hindus or, rather,
appealed only to those Hindus who were preve
by their Westernisation from appealing to ot
Hindus. But the causes of the failure lay dee
What could they be?

All previous Declarations of Rights, Mr. W
surprisingly asserts, were based on the assump
that Rights, originally possessed by the ruler, w
later bestowed by him upon his subjects. W
there any ground for this assumption? Obviou
none. Rights, H.G. concludes, are innate. T
traditional attitude in accordance with wh
men petition rulers for rights concealed anot
assumption, that rulers are bound by law, a
of righteousness to which men are entitled
appeal. There is, then, a universal law of jus
as between man and man, by which rulers
bound and to which subjects may appe
"Clearly it must be something as valid for Ch
as for Chile and all round the world." T
conception of a moral order in the unive
absolute and universal, comes as a surprise, fo
is a notion which Wells has always vigorou
repudiated. Nobody has denounced more vig
ously than he the conception of absolute val
which, though their expression changes from
to age and from people to people, neverthel
constitute a moral order discovered and not crea
by the human mind. Wells's denunciation was
a piece with his general attitude. Science, a
all, knows of no such order, neither is a moral
revealed to laboratory investigation. Neverthel
—there can be no doubt about it—an absol
and universal justice is now being invoked as
necessary philosophical basis of the demand
and recognition of rights. Who prescribed
law or established the order? Or was this j
lying about in the universe waiting to be d
covered? This last seems unlikely. Yet W
is, as it seems to me, here implicitly discarding
view that man invented it; that it is, in ot
words, a mere projection of human aspirati
on to the canvas of a meaningless universe. T
implication of this concealed assumption wou
I suspect, go far to necessitate a modification
not an abandonment, of the traditional Wells
view of the universe.

The point has bearing upon the question w
the Declaration and the extensive propaga
which it has commanded had comparatively
little effect. For why, it may be asked, *should* m
behave righteously? Why *should* rulers conc
justice? Why, to quote H.G.'s curiously remi
scent language, should "the realisation of th
Rights and Duties" be "a Gospel in itse
unless there be a moral law external to man wh
the Declaration expresses and to which the hu
mind responds? Without this necessary me
physical basis the propaganda hangs rootless
the air. The hint which H.G. now drops is n

veloped, but its development would lead, suspect, to the acceptance of an order of ideas ch as that upon which the religions have torically drawn for the enthusiasms which they ve generated.

One other matter deserves attention. From the vised Declaration the right of the individual to termine through his chosen representatives the m of government under which he lives is nitted. The omission is significant and Wells s much to say in its defence. This takes the m of a diatribe on Parliamentary institutions d the conception of representative government riously denounced as "this strange idea that we ust ultimately submit ourselves to a body of rsons elected by the vote of the entire adult mmunity" and "this cancerous system of ntrol by persons" produced by "the epilepsy a general election."

For an alternative we are referred to the new chniques of Mass Observation and the Gallup ll and the old technique of the jury system. e former are devices for obtaining information as what consumers want by interrogating sample nsumers. From discovering the wants of sample nsumers the device can be extended to the lection of sample consumers. The sample nsumers could be empanelled to constitute a rld jury of consumers, one consumer for each the 20,000 areas chosen by lot from the two and half million into which, for selection purposes, e world might be divided. The resultant Grand ry of Consumers would be "far more representative than any electoral body now in existce." It would listen to the complaints, mands and petitions of producing and disbuting agencies for which the ordinary law did t provide, pronounce upon them and, if necesy, amend the law. In effect, it would be the rld's sovereign body or "as much of a world vereign as a unified world will need." Premably to give effect to this conception, the allportant political article now refers not to epresentatives publicly elected," but to "those o are appointed to protect our rights," and says t "the appointment from time to time of these tectors of those rights shall be made according the ways of the people, whether by elder men, election of representatives, or in a common eting, or by lot, or otherwise, according to the stom of the country." Thus, Parliamentary titutions give way to "protectors of rights," who sample consumers selected apparently by lot to resent world geographical units. These samconsumers seem to me a sad declension from Samurai of *A Modern Utopia*; for my part, I am not sure that they are not even a declension from the M.P.s of whom Mr. Wells has many hard things to say. More to the point is the fact that the scheme burkes the problem of power, disregards the carefully devised checks and balances of the representative system which history has shown to be necessary if only as a lesser evil, and effectively disposes of the people's right to determine how they shall be governed. That Mr. Wells should go religious may be overlooked but not that he should go patriarchal.

C. E. M. JOAD

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Carmelite and Poet—St. John of the Cross. By ROBERT SENCOURT. *Hollis and Carter.* 15s.

It is a great thing to be both a poet and a mystic. Some people have been the one and some the other. Few people have been both. It is a great thing, because true poetry always includes some element of mysticism, and true mysticism always includes some element of poetry.

St. John of the Cross was both. One of the major saints of sixteenth-century Spain, he is freely recognised by his countrymen as one of her finest poets also. Mr. Sencourt remarks very rightly that St. John, like his contemporary Luis de León, combined his religion with his lyric art so that his mysticism became the very stuff of his excellence as a poet. Now it is natural, and not unusual, for the mystic (who carries so extraordinary and explosive a source of inspiration within him) to struggle into expression in verse, but not always is the urge towards this outlet accompanied by any high degree of literary talent or even by much technical skill. The sentiments are unexceptionable, but the crown of art is lacking. Sincerity does not suffice to make great literature. But St. John, remarkably, possessed the necessary qualifications. For one thing, he had the poet's impassioned love of nature; and for another he excelled in craftsmanship. I do not believe that even a reader having little Spanish could fail to appreciate the lovely cadence or the exquisite and suitable use of the consonantal v's and l's, as well as the "pure poetry" image, combined in these four short lines about the dove and the wounded deer:

> Vuélvete, paloma,
> que el ciervo vulnerado
> por el otero asoma
> al aire de tu vuelo, y fresco toma.

A single quotation is, of course, inadequate to indicate the range of such a poet; and I must content myself with suggesting to those who are possibly disinclined for religious verse as such, that much of the poetry of San Juan de la Cruz, were one not informed of the religious symbolism behind it, might be taken for the secular and often amorous lyricism of the nature-lover and the human lover. It was not for nothing that he loved dawn and the night, the brooks, the reeds by the river-bank, the solitude of hill-tops; not for nothing that his deepest literary influence, apart from the rest of the Bible, had been the *Song of Songs*.

It is difficult to know what to say of Mr. Sencourt's own book; difficult, without seeming captious and ungrateful. It is painstaking, evidently deeply felt, and on the whole scholarly. (There is one odd lapse from accuracy, when on p. 151 he attributes the birth of a baby to the agèd Duchess of Alba: her young daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Huescar, should have been given the credit). But the truth is, that there is too little bite in it. It is too wordy, too woolly. It suffers from the same fault as Mrs. Cunninghame Graham's Life of St. John's contemporary, St. Teresa of Avila, which he so much admires and so frequently quotes. Enthusiasm is not enough; one requires also a firmness in shape and outline, if the wordiness is not to slop over the edges. As the biographer and interpreter of an exceedingly rarefied and complex subject, Mr. Sencourt does not appear to possess the necessary power; his hand makes weak though pretty gestures; it seldom grasps with strength. He calls his portrait of St. John "a framed portrait"; but, alas, the portrait within the frame soaks away as though it were painted on a foundation of kapok

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earth's surface; it would wind up with Philip Jordan and his colleagues in many war theatres to-day. These men have all loathed war, and have been gladly accepted by the soldiers with whom they worked, because they shared the life and many of the dangers of the campaign, and were the most effective channels through which the soldier's grievances could be remedied.

Philip Jordan, who has visited most of the danger fronts for the *News Chronicle* during this war, has the qualities required for a first-rate war correspondent. He is capable of keeping on good terms with generals as well as ordinary soldiers, though he is not at all afraid of criticising, when, in his view, muddle leads to unnecessary casualties. He can fight cannily as well as wrathfully when the Censorship mangles his copy; at one point in this book he bitterly complains that Censorship has cut out all the criticisms from his despatches and turned a useful article into a conventional eulogy. In this lively Diary, which covers the fighting in Tunisia, he has passages of justified anger as well as finely phrased appreciation for particularly heroic exploits. The descriptions of the fighting are mingled with a continuous barrage against the Giraud-Peyrouton-Bergeret regime. He likes and approves of Macmillan and is converted to a respectful attitude to Eisenhower. One can trace in this day-by-day record the growing power of public opinion at home on the North Africa set-up; it is through the medium of such correspondents as Jordan that the public learnt that anti-Fascists were still in concentration camps and the Fascists still in charge of all the key posts.

Mr. Jordan has another quality which is common to all first-class war reporting. The simple details of everyday life play a far greater part in the life of the soldier than issues of high strategy; to record how they cut across and complicate and relieve the tension of the battle front is part of the correspondent's job. The change from narrowly escaping death in a bombardment to the incredibly sudden peace of a summer's day behind the lines, which is one of the most memorable aspects of war, is repeatedly brought out in this diary. Jordan allows his pen to follow his mind backwards and forwards, from high politics to personal details, and then to some strangely remembered incident of the past, and back again to the preoccupation with death and victory. Perhaps the following passage will serve to illustrate this quality in his writing:

> I remembered to-day something else that Eisenhower said yesterday: he said that people in Britain and America were sore at him " because I haven't produced a Utopia overnight." Here exactly the limits of this charming person are defined. No one expected Utopia: they merely do not expect Eisenhower to give his moral backing to precisely that form of wickedness which the men at the front believe they are dying to destroy.
>
> *February 1st*—I saw three storks on the way back to Thibar, one in his nest on a chimney pot. I have never seen this before. It recalled to me, for some reason, how I found a copy of *Hansel and Gretel* in my stocking on the fifth Christmas of my life; and of how, stricken with terror, I read it then and there, with the result that I have been frightened of the dark ever since! This morning, when I saw the stork, I could hear the hiss of gas through the mantle on the far side of the room that was my night nursery. It was a lovely drive, warm, and the earth smelled of spring. We came back by the long route, through Le Kef and Teboursouk and over the mountain, because the usual road was choked with tank-transporters bringing up the Shermans for the 6th Division.

This is not great writing, but it is authentic.

TOM PAINE

GREECE GOES ON

Greece and Britain. By STANLEY CASSON. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Miracle in Hellas. By BETTY WASON. *Museum Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Greek Fire. By ANDRÉ MICHALOPOULOS. *Joseph.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

To Collins's colour books about England and English civilisation, under the general editorship of Mr. W. J. Turner, is being added a new series to deal with the relationship and mutual influence between Great Britain and other nations; and this is given a good start by a book about England and Greece by Lt.-Col. Casson, formerly even better known as Mr. Stanley Casson of New College. The eleven colour plates seem better than usual, possibly because the pictures chosen are better suited to the process; and there are more than 60 in black and white. The Cretan 15th century ikon, the landscape engravings from Dodwell's *Travels*, the French consul sitting on his veranda with one of the Elgin marbles at his side and a view of the Acropolis in the background, or a watercolour of Mount Athos by Edward Lear—which is the most enchanting? If you have a taste for primitives, you will like best of all the picture of the Siege of Athens in 1826, drawn to the instructions of General Makrygiannes. It looks rather like a painting by Raoul Dufy. We are told here only that it is reproduced by permission of the King; and I think I can add something to
this. The General originally prepared t
copies of an illustrated narrative of his o
experiences in the War of Independence. One
these is now in the Gennadius Library in Athen
the other was sent by the General as a prese
to Lord Palmerston, who seems to have taken
home with him when he left the Foreign Offi
It turned up later in Ireland and was sent by
heirs not to the Foreign Office, where it righ
belonged, but to Queen Victoria, and it is now
the Royal Library at Windsor. Lt.-Col. Casso
is far from merely writing a running commenta
on the pictures, some of which, indeed, se
rather irrelevant; and equally far, in a book
111 pages, from giving a complete history of t
subject from the earliest times. After showi
that there is no reason for believing that the earlie
Greek traders to England were anticipated by t
Phoenicians, and that there is very good reas
for believing the story, quoted and discredite
by Strabo, of the circumnavigation of Gre
Britain by Pytheas of Marseilles not later th
300 B.C., he is inspired by the Byzantine treasu
discovered in an Anglo-Saxon burial ship
Suffolk in 1939 to concentrate his attention
Byzantine influences in England. He does n
mention the fact that Constantine the Great, t
founder of Constantinople, was elevated to t
imperial office at York, which has always seem
to me one of the most surprising links betwe
West and East. He does give us an admirab
chapter, with many illustrations of stone cross
and illuminated manuscripts, about Byzanti
elements in a brilliant period of Anglo-Saxon
which was brought to an end by the Norm
Conquest. After this, and a short chapter
Richard Cœur de Lion's conquest of Cyprus,
two best plums are a pair of travellers, a Gre
from Corfu who visited the Court of Henry VII
and an English organ-maker at the end of t
same century who was sent to take an organ as
present from the Levant merchants to t
Sultan of Turkey and landed on the way in Za
and rode across Thessaly. Both observe
provide some illuminating and amusing quo
tions.

Unfortunately one of the best remarks of t
Greek, Nicander Nucius, at the expense of t
Irish, is too good to be true. The inhabitants
Hibernia, Nicander is quoted as saying, " reje
political institutions and other importations
But Lt.-Col. Casson has innocently swallowed wh
the translation provided by the Camden Soci
when they published the *Travels of Nican*
Nucius in 1841. The Greek text shows that wh
Nicander wrote was that the Irish *politeias a*

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ioumtal, which seems to mean that the Irish have some claim to be civilised."

The necessity of vindicating the Irish has left o room to talk about the rest of Lt.-Col. Casson's harming little book; and only just room to ecommend the others.

Miss Betty Wason, author of *Miracle in Hellas*, as correspondent of the Columbia Broadcasting ystem in Greece from August, 1940, to June, 941, and gives an interesting account of the erman occupation of Athens. She observes ell, she is scholarly and well informed, and she olds enlightened views on the future unity of the alkans and the possibilities of American influence. he third book, *Greek Fire*, is something better han a bunch of broadcasts and addresses collected by M. André Michalopoulos, who, when e was Minister of Information in the Greek overnment in London, showed that he could peak and write with force, humour, and a inimum of exaggeration. His introduction ives valuable details of the political situation in thens in April and May, 1941, and of his own xciting escape with the King and the Government to Crete and Egypt. All three books in heir different ways, archæological, journalistic nd political, contribute something to an idea of he Greek spirit that is continuous and consoling. he barbarians raging can never overcome it or cquire it, and when they have become one of he forgotten plagues of the past, it will still be live to write their history.

JOHN MAVROGORDATO

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et by Samuel Smiles

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eport by Samuel Smiles

A number of competitors took ironically my eference to the "progress" of the culinary art. . P. Meadway, for instance, begins "There luscious pam, the Gourmet's Chiefest prize Vied with her ster Prem." But this view comprehensibly failed to produce very good Miltonic verse. Good entries came from Nancy Gunter, G. Ward, Towanbucket, L. M. G., Margaret Shaw and Lois Spencer, but several of these came nearer to Keats than to Milton. R. J. P. Hewison, excellent in style, evaded the subject. The first prize of two guineas goes to E. M. for as dazzling an entry as I have ever seen printed on this page: and a guinea each to Don Johnne (style *a* but material *γ*) and to Leslie Johnson (a parody rather than an interpolation). I print Willy Tadpole's verses for their charm, but I think they are less Miltonic than the winning entries.

[All Fish from Sea or Shore . . . for which was drain'd
Pontus, and *Lucrine* bay, and *Afric* coast.]
Nor wanted those that to a later time
Yielded their subtil flavours, *Natives* Light
Of *Colchester*, and Trout cerulean,[1]
Sole-mornay, or Langusta; and a Sauce
Imagin'd rather oft than elsewhere found
By *Escofier*, *Bulestin*, or *Vatel*
With delicatest inspiration: Soups
Mulligatawny, *Bisk*, *Minestra*, *Borch*,
These clear, they thick, *Lucullan* Fables true,
If true, here only, and with concomitant
Toast which th' Australian Nightingale resounds,
Not th' *Attic*,[2] season'd well with lively Salt,
Of *Cerebos* and whitest noonday born.
For Meat, that toothsome Pasty, quaintly call'd
Of *Business-woman* on the breeze a-wing,[3]
And Ducks of *Rouen* prest, with Cherries round
Redning,[4] and Hares ineffably injugged:
Fruits costly anow to satisfy the Spouse
Of *Tanqueray*,[5] Pine-apple, Prickly Pear
Of Avocado, Mango, or Mangosteen.
[Alas, how simple, to these cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted *Eve*.]

[1] Truite au bleu.
[2] Toast Melba.
[3] Vol-au-veut à la Financière.
[4] Canard de Rouen à la Montmorency.
[5] "I do like fruit when it's expensive."

E. M.

And all to please and sate the curious Sense,
Strainge rootes, Potatoe and Eryngo brought
Sea-borne across the vast *Atlantic* wastes,
Earth's Apples hight, *Hesperean* fables true
True heere once only, and of delicious taste:
Whether in earthen jerkin bak'd, or sodd,
Whited to lustrous floure, with butter masht
That flow'd in lordly dish to that doom'd lord
Sisera, th' invader of the *Chosen*: crisp'd
In golden russett Chippes, or homely boil'd
Or fry'd or roast in ash, or hott, moiste, cold
In savoury Sallet, still th'ambiguous Roote
By those ungodly Huns *Cartophel* hight
(They ignorant, nor loving papers truth)
By Gaules the *Pomme-de-Terre*, wild Irish *Spudde*.
Beyond all names bore welcome in its *Eyes*
In unsuperfluous even proportion
Unsimple as this Earth's simplicity
That still returnes, turned by Men every way,
Still to th' eternall glory of one Lord
Who roots all ritches, all, in simplest Soyle.

DON JOHNNE

And sundry whets well purpos'd to engage
The nicest palate; here a zestful paste
Compounded from the bile-secreting glands
Of pinguid geese, there sapid piscine spawn
From Muscovy, in granules esculent,
And Caledonia's vermeil-tinctured fish
Cunningly fumed; Sardinia's rocky coast
Yielded its finny dwarfs, while finest beeves
Furnish'd a caudal pottage, whence arose
A nidorous vapour telling of delights
Ingestive; an enormous salver held
The carcase of that gallinaceous fowl
Miscalled an Ottomite, encinctured quite
By gut-bound tubes of finely carven meats,
And inly cramm'd with medley of sweet herbs.
To round the feast a lesser board sustain'd
Choice virid growths in rare emulsion bathed
Of tang acetous; sweetmeats gelid made
By frigorific art, and lactic curds
Compress'd, imbrued with mould, cerulean-vein'd.

LESLIE JOHNSON

or crisped on the grill,
And cool'd thereafter. Nigh in order lay
Clear phials filled with pulp of nectarine
And peach in sweet collusion. Purple grapes
Veiled in their cloudy bloom, hung down beside
Apples more rosy than the Hesperides
Could ever ripen. Rosy-hued likewise
Lay the sliced flesh of the enamoured quail
Drawn to the net by love-calls simulant
Made sonorous on the sub-lit Apennine
Or southward by Girgenti. Skewered grouse
Rose by the side of venison embraised
In juice of celery and sweet marjoram blent,
With portions of the northern Trumpeter
Reft of the swan's down, and embalmed in sage
And mingled spice of rosemary and mint.
Wine flowed from rounded flagons so perfumed.
That relish by incipience forewent
The actual draught, and more elation wrought
Than all the vintage of Burgundian vales
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